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THE PITIFUL HISTORY OF JAMES NAYLER.

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"AND indeed many thought he was too furiously persecuted by some rigid men," said that high-minded statesman, Bulstrode Whitelock, in speaking of the sufferings of Nayler; and of all those who have written dispassionately on the question during the two centuries which have elapsed since this miserable enthusiast gave such scandal to the grave burgesses of Bristol, not one has been found to take the side of these "rigid men."

The sufferings of Nayler were so terrible that they can never be forgotten, and their severity is too apt to hide the true circumstances of the case. Had he been only censured, his punishment would still have been unconstitutional and he himself a sufferer that others might be terrified. Besides this, his case is a curious example of the powerlessness of the Protector during the last few years of his life.

James Nayler was born in a tiny village near Wakefield in 1616. His father was a yeoman, who by dint of hard work managed to leave his son what, in those days of simple living, was a respectable competency, as well as to give him sufficient education to write with some degree of taste. James states that he married soon after attaining his majority, adding curiously enough, "according to the world." When the civil war broke out he left his young wife to serve as a private in the troop commanded by Lord Fairfax, but he distinguished himself so often that when he left the army he was quartermaster of Major General Lambert's regiment. In 1649 a severe illness disabled him for further service, and returning to his native village, he became a farmer, and a leading member of a congregation of Independents which met in a neighbouring village. When he unhappily came under the notice of Parliament, it was alleged that he was turned out of this church for blasphemy and "uncivil carriage to one Mrs. Roper;" but as no proof was offered, and as it was then the custom to make every imaginable imputation of villainy against a religious opponent without troubling about the foundation, this may be

dismissed as a mere malicious fabrication, although that he did kiss the said Mrs. Roper, and that Mrs. Roper did kiss him, is not improbable, James never being averse to that osculation between brethren and sisters known as the kiss of peace. That he was not contented with the teaching of the sect he had joined is certain, and it is very probable he was a thorn in the side of the congregation. As a matter of fact, he was always somewhat fanatical in religious matters; but then, so were nearly all his neighbours. England was at that time torn with conflicting religious parties, and the man who was not fanatical was looked on always with sourness, generally with suspicion.

Nayler had been following the plough for about two years when George Fox visited Wakefield, and James went to hear him. Conscious of spiritual needs unsatisfied by his creed, he was inclined to be won by the rough eloquence of the "man in the leathern breeches," and after a long conversation with Fox, he was, to use a favourite Quaker expression, convinced, and openly threw in his lot with the Friends. For nearly a year longer, however, he continued quietly at home, until, when one day he was at the plough-tail, he imagined he heard a voice bidding him, "Go out from his kindred and from his father's house, having a promise given with it that the Lord should be with him." Intoxicated with joy, he left the field half-ploughed, and hurrying home, began to prepare for his journey, until he reflected that no direction where to go or what to do had been given, when with shame of face and a guilty conscience he returned to his work. That Nayler should have felt guilty when he had no opportunity of obedience reveals a curious state of mind, though one which students of early Quaker literature know to have been common at this period. For a few weeks he went on with his daily work as if nothing had happened, until "the wrath of God was upon him, so that he was made a wonder to others, and it was thought he would have died," but "being made willing to obey he got better." A friend called to see him, and James, intending to go only a little way home with him, had got a mile or two from his home when he felt "himself commanded to go to the west." Ignorant alike of his destination and the purpose of his journey, unprovided with money or clothes, and apparently without even sending a message to his wife, he went to the "west." On his arrival there, "it was given to him what to declare, and thus he continued, not knowing one day what he was to do on the morrow." What his wife might think of his absence does not seem to have occurred to him.

Where lay the west to which he went we shall never know; probably it was some village westward of Wakefield, but certainly not to what we now call the West of England, for a week later Fox chronicles a visit to Swarthmore Hall, the early head-quarters of Quakerism, when Nayler was his companion. On this journey he experienced his first taste of persecution, for at Walney some forty

men tried to drown Fox, and as he managed to escape fell upon Nayler, and nearly beat the life out of him. The petty riot arose from a silly woman choosing to believe that "the first Quaker" had bewitched her husband into becoming one of his followers. Somewhat later in this same year James appears as party to a trial at Lancaster, and still later as one who suffered much from the violence of "certain priests in Westmoreland"—priests being the proper Quaker term for paid ministers of any denomination whatsoever. Before the year closed, he was, with Francis Howgill, a like-minded friend, committed to Appleby gaol on a charge of blasphemy, at the instance of some preachers. The friends were tried at the sessions, but their accusers were unable to substantiate the charge sufficiently to procure a conviction, although when Quakers were concerned this was a scandalously easy matter. The laws against blasphemy were then even vaguer than now, and each magistrate seems to have had his own code, which usually meant dismissing charges against those to whose opinions he inclined, and coming down heavily on all others. It is hardly necessary to say that scarcely any magistrates inclined towards Quakerism. Legally, of course, Nayler and Howgill should have been liberated, but the ministers of Lancashire and Westmoreland having petitioned against it, the justices openly allowed that they dared not face the wrath of these divines, and sent them back to prison until they could "answer" the petitions. After being in prison several weeks, James made his "answer" by publishing a tractate which he called "Truth cleansed from Scandal," and was duly liberated, which, considering the tract is singularly vituperative, is certainly remarkable.

For two years James Nayler continued to preach in the northern counties, and then, unhappily, he came to London. He seems to have had misgivings as to the wisdom of the act, for he says in the "Life of God in all," a little tract in which he describes the causes of his fall, that "he entered the place in the greatest fear, in spirit foreseeing that something terrible was to befall him."

One of the justices who sat on the bench when he was tried for blasphemy at Appleby was named Gervase Benson. Almost immediately after the trial he became a Quaker, and is the first Friend who is known to have visited London. Probably the next was Howgill, Nayler's companion at the trial. Benson appears to have been merely a visitor, but Howgill came as a missionary, and speedily gathered a small congregation, which met in a house in Watling Street, burnt down by the great fire, over which he presided, till a female preacher, Annie Downer, came to town, when it seems to have been given into her charge. Howgill and Burrough—another popular Quaker minister—however, continued to preach, and before the end of this year, 1653, Quakerism was only less flourishing in the metropolis than it was among the Cumberland Hills.

From the time of his entering London till that of his escapade in Bristol it is difficult to trace Nayler's history clearly; it was one which no Friend cared to remember, and certainly not to record, while he was too insignificant for opponents to trouble about. All that is certain is that he preached so often and well as to become an object of adulation to certain weak sisters, who compared his eloquence with that of his fellow-ministers greatly to their disadvantage, and even went so far as to create disturbances when Burrough and Howgill were preaching. These grave ministers remonstrated, and at length severely and publicly reproved their erring sisters, who, so far from being silenced, trumped up a number of petty charges against them, and submitted the matter to Nayler with the hope of making a quarrel between them; and great was their disappointment at his having the good sense "not to appear forward to condemn them." His reluctance caused one of his admirers to exclaim in a tone of bitter reproach, "I looked for judgment, but behold a cry," which meaningless sentence, or rather, petty exhibition of spite, he took as a sign of deep grief, or possibly even as a "divine leading." If we may judge from what is known of Nayler's early life and his writings, he seems to have been over-ready to look for a "divine leading" in everything, and directly he fancied he met with one to have acted on it without attempting to apply it to the test of reason. Certain it is that from this time he was a dupe in the hands of a number of weak-brained enthusiasts and as open to flattery as a silly girl, and, as a natural consequence, became estranged from the more sober-minded of the Friends. Not content with verbal flattery, his admirers about this time commenced to write him letters full of perfervid nonsense, actually styling him "the Everlasting Son of Righteousness," "The Fairest among Ten Thousand," and other names even more blasphemous. Foolish enough not to destroy them, these silly letters were afterwards produced to secure his condemnation. Some years later he explains his conduct by saying that he was at this time in a "state of darkness," and "feared to restrain his followers lest he might offend what was right in them . . . forbearing to judge them in a spirit of humility, and receiving their homage not as honour done to his person but to the extraordinary manifestation of Christ which he continued to think he possessed." George Fox sums the whole up by remarking that he "was very dark" and "ran into imaginations."

Probably these ridiculous performances took place in 1656, for we can gather from the sixteen pamphlets he published during the preceding year that he was not then separated from the Friends; not, by the way, that he ever did separate from them—they disowned him.

During the year 1656, while on a preaching expedition in the West of England, George Fox was thrown into prison at Launce-

ton, and this coming to the ears of the Quakers in London, quite a party set off to visit him, which, considering the difficulty and expense of travelling in those days, argues a feeling of deep personal affection for the "first Quaker." Perhaps hoping that his leader's good offices might bring him once more into unity with the sect, Naylor went with the Friends. No one can doubt that James was a warm-hearted man, and he may have been one of those who anxiously begged to be allowed to take Fox's place in prison. As soon as the party reached Exeter they were arrested and sent to gaol, according to an anonymous tract, as vagrants, where they lay till released by order of the Council. Naylor was probably liberated before the rest, and went away, but he had not gone more than twenty miles when he was fetched back and fined twenty marks for not taking off his hat in court; after which he stayed in Exeter. It is highly improbable that his fanatical adherents had gone into Devonshire with him, but it was not long before some of them joined him there, for it is recorded that while in Exeter gaol, some women, much to the disgust of the Friends, came and kissed his feet, and that when he left it was with a man walking bareheaded before him. In his "Journal," George Fox hints at a disturbance, probably about this; for the founder of Quakerism had obtained his release, and visited in confinement the very people who had come nearly two hundred miles to comfort him. Naylor does not seem to have been present at the first interview, but met Fox on the following day, when he received in a slighting manner some advice from his leader, yet offered to kiss the giver. Fox, who had previously written him a strong letter of remonstrance, which James had treated as he did the advice, roughly refused the salute. "Thou hast turned against the power of God; I will have none of thy kisses." The two parted but lukewarm friends, if not, indeed, as tacit enemies. "He was dark and much put out," is the comment Fox makes on this interview.

Still the man in the leathern breeches made one more effort to arrest Naylor's folly. "James," he wrote, "thou hast judged and written thy scrub and false letters against him; thou shouldst not. Thou shouldst not deal so presumptuously against the innocent . . . And, James, it will be harder for thee to set down thy rude company than it was for thee to set them up (if thou dost ever come to know and own Christ), whose impudence doth speak and blaspheme the truth."

Naylor now turned his back on Exeter and set out for Bristol, a city in which Quakerism was strong through persecution. During the journey his attendants took off their garments to spread under his horse's feet as he entered the different towns, and sang hymns in which they ascribed to him the highest conceivable attributes. As he entered Bristol a man named John Stranger walked before

him, while the women sang, "Holy, Holy, Holy," &c., and treated him with the reverence due to a divinity.

Bristol was a well-regulated city, but it did not like Quakers, perhaps because, like all seaports, it cherished certain convenient vices which the Friends had been forward to condemn, and Nayler had scarcely entered the streets when he and his followers were seized and clapped into prison. This, there can be no doubt, was a necessity for the well-being of society; it would have been for the well-being of Nayler had he been sent to a madhouse instead, for the man's head was turned with vanity.

It seemed much more terrible to the good citizens of Bristol that Nayler should passively receive homage than that the others should have offered it, and his silly followers were retained in prison merely to secure their witnessing against him. His crime was considered too serious for the Bristol magistrates to judge, besides there was no law by which they could punish him adequately, so they remitted the matter to the Parliament, which took the undignified and unconstitutional step of forming itself into a criminal court. A committee of examination was named and Nayler was sent to London to appear before it.

The committee commenced its inquiry by endeavouring to rake up what scandal they could regarding Nayler's past life. Much that they got was utterly false, the rest easily explainable to a dispassionate person. It consisted chiefly in the old tale regarding Mrs. Roper and some alleged improprieties in Somersetshire with his female votaries. What foundation there was for the former we have seen, and for the latter it seems to have been equally vague. The committee next took each name of adoration which Nayler was said to have been called, and examined into its truth. Even the terms in the letters—which by merely reading he could not be reasonably held to have connived at—were treated as gravely as if he had written them.

The first charge against him was that he "had assumed the gesture, words, honour, worship, and miracles of our Blessed Saviour!" It was complained that his appearance, even to the colour of his hair and the manner of cutting his beard, was like that which tradition reported to have belonged to Christ, and the indictment positively recounted the supposed physical aspects of our Lord! Certainly such a travesty of justice was never enacted before, yet none of the members of the committee seem to have been alive to the absurd illogicality of the proceeding. If Nayler's face and figure did agree with traditional report, was he to blame? Unhappily, his complacent imitation of the entry into Jerusalem lent substance to the latter part of the charge.

Each of his followers was repeatedly cross-questioned. One Dorcas Erbury allowed that she had spread her garments before him, and so did another woman, pleading in defence that it was "in obedience to the Lord." Hannah Stranger stated that being

"commanded" so to do, she had bent her knees to him, and her husband, John Stranger, pleaded the same authority—having walked bareheaded before the prisoner. When questioned, Nayler allowed that the witnesses had told the truth, and seemed fully satisfied that they had only acted in obedience to divine commands. To the charge of ascribing to him blasphemous honours Nayler's followers confessed in effect if not in words, and James tried to justify them by explaining that they were paying homage to the divine spirit which dwelt in him as a believer.

The most damaging evidence was that of Dorcas Erbury, an utterly foolish fanatic. She stated that while in Exeter gaol she was dead for two days, and that Nayler laid his hands upon her and raised her to life. In reply to a question as to the truth of this, he said, "If you speak of such death as you may understand, she was dead"—a mysterious answer which produced a demand for further explanation. "I shall say little of myself in that thing," was all he said. On being asked whether he raised her from the dead, he replied that he could do nothing of himself, but clearly implied that when he laid his hands on her head "there came a power from above," thereby virtually admitting the correctness of the charge. His answers throughout the examination were vague, shuffling, and unsatisfactory, though doubtless intended to be impressive; like many of the primitive Quakers, he delighted in being so mysterious as to be well-nigh unintelligible. It is sad to think how much these good people suffered because they would not give a plain answer to a plain question.

The gaoler affirmed that while in prison James usually sat in a chair with his friends round him, singing, "Holy, Holy," &c., and that he never showed any dislike to such worship, which there is every reason to believe was the simple truth. Just before the examination closed Nayler said, "I do abhor that any of that honour that is due to God should be given to me, as I am a creature. But it pleased the Lord to set me up as a sign of the coming of the Righteous One, and what hath been done in my passing through the towns I was commanded by the power of the Lord. I was commanded to suffer such things to be done to the outward as a sign: I abhor any honour as a creature." As this was the only explanation he could give, the examination was closed, and the committee reported that James Nayler was guilty of blasphemy.

The debate as to the punishment which should be awarded occupied the House no less than twelve times. Some were for sentencing him to be hanged, but Bulstrode Whitelock argued that blasphemy was not punishable with death either by the laws of God, nature, or man, and the majority concurred with him, though it is to be feared that his argument made his name unsavoury to the bigots. Curiously enough, the House refused to sanction Nayler's hair being cut as a part of his punishment.

On the 18th of December he was brought to the bar to hear his sentence. He asked humbly enough what was the charge against him. "You shall learn it from your sentence," brutally replied Widdrington, the Speaker, and then he announced that the decision of the House was—"That James Nayler be set in the pillory with his head in the pillory, in the Palace Yard, Westminster, during the space of two hours on Thursday next, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange, London, and there likewise to be set in the pillory, with his head in the pillory, for the space of two hours on Saturday next, in each place wearing a paper containing a description of his crimes, and that at the Old Exchange his tongue be bored through with a hot iron and then he be there stigmatized in the forehead with the letter B, and that he be afterwards sent to Bristol, and be conveyed into and through the said city on horseback with his face backward, and there also be publickly whipt the next day after he comes thither, and that thence he be committed to prison in Bridewell, London, and there be restrained from the society of all people, and there to labour till he shall be released by Parliament, and during that time he be debarred the use of pens, ink, and paper, and shall have no relief but what he earns by his daily labour." "A sentence," says Neal, "much too severe for such a simple, obstinate creature."

If such was to be the punishment of the passive, what sufferings could be sufficient for the active? Dorcas Erbury and the rest were restrained for a day or two and then liberated! In truth, the punishment was inflicted not for blasphemy, but in the hope that by making a terrible example of a person of note and influence, discredited though he was with the sect, the House might strike a blow at a creed it had reason to dread without making itself unpopular by passing fresh laws restraining religious liberty. It was a cowardly action, and, as subsequent events showed, as short-sighted as such cheap expedients usually are.

Nayler heard his sentence without flinching, and as he turned to leave the House said quietly, "He that prepared the body will enable me to suffer, and I pray He may not lay it to your charge."

On the Thursday he suffered the first part of his punishment, and was so much weakened by it that for its own sake the Parliament judged it wisest to postpone the remainder for a week.

One proof that the alleged blasphemy was not the real reason for Nayler's treatment is that a London merchant named Rich, who had written to the Speaker during the trial offering to prove that, scripturally speaking, Nayler was not a blasphemer, and who had accosted various members at the very door of the House with texts which conveyed imputations on their Christianity, and had even shouted within the dread precincts of the Court of Chancery that "the land mourned because of oppression," sang at the foot

of the pillory the very words for which his friend was then suffering. There was plenty of ground for believing Nayler insane, but this man was beyond doubt in his senses.

The brief respite the House had granted encouraged the Friends to hope that a petition for the annulment of the rest of the sentence might be favourably received, and accordingly one signed by "divers well-affected persons" was presented without delay. After expressing proper "abhorrence" of Nayler's crime, the petitioners sought to propitiate the House by likening it to the "terrors of Mount Sinai!" Here, surely, was blasphemy sufficient to stir the blood of any right-minded Puritan, yet the Commons passed it by, though they ignored the prayer of the petition. Possibly the delicacy of the flattery was too great to allow the rise of religious resentment.

The trial also afforded the House one more opportunity of showing its independence. Partly shocked at the sentence, partly disgusted at the way in which the House had received the petition, the Protector wrote to his "faithful Commons," and a phrase in his letter shows that he was alarmed for his prerogative. After disclaiming any intention of countenancing such crimes as he says "are imputed"—the word is significant—"to Nayler, and not knowing how far such a proceeding (wholly without us) may extend in the consequences of it, we desire the House will let us know the grounds and reasons whereupon they have proceeded." The lion had become old and weak, so after a fruitless debate the House agreed to shelve the letter unanswered. Finding the Commons disinclined even to reply to them, the petitioners now appealed to Cromwell to again intercede in Nayler's behalf, but the Protector seems to have declined; Nayler was too unimportant to be worth the risk of a second snubbing.

During the interval between the infliction of the two parts of Nayler's punishment in London the House took the extraordinary step of sending five Independent ministers to interview him. As they were despatched before the receipt of the Protector's letter, this could only have been done to justify their severity; and, if further proof be wanting, it is to be found that only Independents—a sect at bitter war with the Friends—were selected, and in the conduct of the ministers themselves, which to say the least was highly dubious. Nayler viewed their visit with undisguised suspicion and declined to reply to any questions unless the answers were written down and a signed copy left with the keeper of the gaol. At first they consented, but when he accused them of "seeking to insnare the innocent" they hastily burnt the papers and left. From Nayler's account of the conference it appears that he persisted in renouncing any adoration of himself as a creature, yet justifying the conduct of his followers. "Was Elisha guilty of blasphemy," he asked, "for he did not reprove the Shunnamite when she fell at his feet?"

The second part of the sentence was duly inflicted. The executioner held the red-hot iron in his tongue for a few moments so that all might see, and the brand to his forehead till the flesh smoked, but the sufferer never winced. When he was released Rich came forward, kissed him, and licked the wounds, and the silly women who had wrought the trouble sat beneath while he stood in the pillory. Three weeks later he was removed to Bristol, and there underwent the third part of his sentence. As he was led through the city, riding with his face to the horse's tail, Rich walked bareheaded before him, singing the very words which a couple of months before had so frightened the worthy citizens. The flogging was merely nominal, as a man was permitted to hold back the executioner's arm.

Nayler was now brought back to London and committed to Bridewell. A scurrilous anonymous tract affirms that he "attempted to carry on the imposture . . . and fasted three days; but flesh and blood being able to hold out no longer, he fell to work to earn himself some food;" but a petition to the Protector and his counsel from Nayler's wife, who had come from the north to attend on her husband, shows this to be a mere malicious fabrication. The petition records that, "Though my husband, after all his extreme sufferings, needs refreshment for his recovery, he is cast into the Hole in Bridewell, where the damp strikes up his legs like water, and he wants air and fire. He is kept under three keys, in three several men's hands, and is not allowed a candle, and I cannot see him unless four governors be present, nor may he have what I carry him. This is contrary to Parliament orders and yours, for you allowed me to come to him and expressly ordered him necessaries. His keepers are cruel, especially Win, who refused him some conduit water because there was a little sugar in it, and would not let him have a dish of turnips and other things I had taken to preserve his life. To harden your hearts they raise a false report that he starves himself and will not eat what is taken him, but he only refuses what is too strong for his weak state. They have kept his condition from me, and now the doctor orders him milk with sugar of roses. If he is to continue in prison, I beg that he may have air, fire, and candlelight, and that I may attend him and supply him with necessaries out of his own estate. But rather I beg his release, as he has suffered all the parts of your sentence and is only in prison during pleasure."

An order was instantly made that "The governor of Bridewell suffer James Nayler's wife to come to him, and see that he have all necessaries according to the order of Parliament."

From this it is evident that the House, probably at Cromwell's instance, thought it best to reconsider the question; indeed, it seems to have been alarmed at its own action, for it took the unprecedented step of publishing a small tract to vindicate its

conduct, and permitted Nayler the use of pen and paper, as is shown by the number of pamphlets he wrote while in prison. Indeed, it is probable that he was even allowed a holiday, for Whitehead, in his journal, records that Nayler was with him in Westmoreland in 1657, and there is reasonable proof of the correctness of the statement.

During the earlier portion of his imprisonment Nayler's fanatical followers were constant visitants and attempted to renew their worship, but before many weeks had passed by, quiet and meditation had brought the visionary to his senses, and he began to write pamphlets denouncing the error of his ways.

In 1659 Parliament ordered him to be released, and almost his first act was to go to Bristol and there make a public confession of his folly. The Bristol Quakers had undergone considerable persecution, and their prospects suffered no small injury through his conduct, yet they were sufficiently generous to forgive him and welcome him to their homes, and, what is more, to abstain from reproaches.

From this time till his almost tragical death in 1660 little is certainly known about him. Towards the end of that year he set out to visit his Yorkshire home for the first time since his arrival in London, probably for the first time since he left it so hurriedly eight years before. As he rode through Huntingdon, a Friend remarked that he was "in a frame of mind so awful as that he appeared to be redeemed from the world." That same night he was picked up in a field near the village of King's Rippon, and from the condition in which he was found, it was conjectured he had been knocked down and robbed. Though he recovered consciousness and lived some days, possibly from some scruple of a conscience always over-sensitive, he would give no account of the matter. "You have refreshed my body, the Lord refresh your souls," he said to the people who tended him, and declined to allow any of his friends to be sent for. So ended a life most miserable, yet neither undignified nor useless.

For the benefit of those interested in such matters, it may be mentioned that Nayler is said to have been "a man of ruddy complexion, with brown hair and slank (*sic*), hanging a little below his jaw bones; of an indifferent height, not very long-visaged, nor very round; close-shaven, a sad and downcast look and melancholy countenance, a little band close to his collar, with no band strings, his hat hanging over his brows, his voice neither high nor low, but raised a little in the middle." As this description is taken from a tract which declares that Quakers consider the Bible ought to be burned, and that they do not believe in another world, it may be merely conjectural, and possibly the only accurate glimpse to be obtained of Nayler's appearance is in the brief note in which Ellwood, Milton's secretary, records his astonishment at the lucid way in which James could argue, and his surprise at the manner

in which one who appeared "a plain, simple husbandman or shepherd" could "handle the subject with so much perspicuity and clear demonstration."

A MODERN OBERON.

CHARGE! And with lily-lance well held in rest
A child came speeding o'er the shaven grass.
The linnets whispering in their leafy nest,
Sang him their sweetest as they heard him pass;
Then watched with jewel-eyes th' unequal fray
Twixt boy and roses, as with shouts of glee
He stormed the crimson banners spray on spray,
And waved his lily-lance in victory.

The August sunshine through the sheltering boughs
Came pouring in a long continuous stream
Of molten glory, and athwart his brows
It cast an aureole, whose flickering gleam
Awoke the beauty in the childish eyes,
As, resting with his lilies in his hand,
—A very Oberon in modern guise—
He stood the conqueror of Fairyland!

Then homeward in a stately, martial way,
The rebel-roses at his careless feet,
He marched triumphant, and an amorous ray
Of golden sunshine, that had found him sweet
And brave and king-like in his recent fight,
Crept softly upward to the dimpled breast
And lay there lovingly, as bathed in light,
He passed contented to his noonday rest.

M. E. W.

JEDDAH AND THE MECCA PILGRIMS.

IT is not often one hears of Jeddah—notable as the jealously-guarded sea-port and key to the great citadel of Moslem superstition and devotion, Mecca—for this reason, that steamers rarely visit it, lying solitary as it does, far out of the way of the great trans-oceanic thoroughfare. It so happened, however, that during a voyage from Venice to Bombay, we got a chance of seeing this sample of Arabian and Egyptian towns, planted, like most of them, in the midst of trackless sandy deserts. As the gateway towards the realization of the life's dream of tens of thousands of pilgrims who annually stream towards Mecca from all quarters of Mahommedanism, perhaps a slight description of the town and some of its pilgrim arrivals may not be uninteresting.

One fine October morning we steamed away from the Grand Esplanade of the "Queen of the Waters," while a knot of people on the quay kept waving handkerchiefs till we glided out of sight and pursued our course down the Adriatic. We passengers were a varied collection of German, French, Swiss, and English, including a lady and gentleman from Scotland. Among the ship's company, the only Briton was the chief engineer; and as he was looked upon as a foreign element by the Austrians and Italians, continual skirmishes arose between them, which unexpectedly varied the monotony of our sea-voyage. Needless to say, we, his country-people, sympathized with the engineer, a sturdy, honest fellow, whose great sin appeared to be that he was very popular with the passengers, while the captain was not. The latter, a vehement southern Italian, on some imaginary plea forbade the engineer the quarter-deck, while we on the other hand sought his company at his cabin-door, rather to the captain's annoyance. A perfect nightmare on board, however, was the cook, an Italian, who sent the food to table swimming in grease. Our foreign fellow-passengers did not seem to quarrel much with this rather Arctic diet in a temperature of 90° in the shade, but on the contrary seemed to pity our feeble appetites that induced us to dine chiefly on the fruit dessert. Despite, however, the malefactions of the cook, who, as one of his victims revengefully observed, earned being cooked in his own grease, we managed to reach Port Said in tolerable health and spirits, and anchored close to the shore. On landing, we at once supplied ourselves with "salar topies," or pith hats, to protect our heads from the too fervid sun.

The natives, principally Arabs and Egyptians, looked an ill-favoured, almost truculent pack, especially those that lounged along the harbour; and a certain want of order and cleanliness seemed to proclaim Oriental rule throughout the irregular little town, built on a point of the sandy desert. Here we were obliged to lie all night till the prescribed hour of six o'clock in the morning, when we were admitted into the Suez Canal—the wonderful uniting link between the two oceans. At its opening, when the sea-water was first admitted into it, it filled a large low-lying tract of the sandy plain, which now presents the curious spectacle of two little far inland seas—the Salt Water Lakes—through the midst of which the canal passes. Here we have the same deep blue of the outside sea, with plenty of fish, and porpoises bounding about in great numbers on the surface.

Then once more we are into the narrow ditch-like canal, where we still have the same clear blue water and plentiful fish, which latter, Egyptians in canoes and queer Noah-Ark like crafts are angling for. So near do the banks seem as you look down upon them from the lofty decks of the ship, that you almost fancy you could leap ashore; and in reality, so close are they that one great wave caused by the motion of the ship keeps preceding us, rolling up on the banks, while another follows, closing up the vacuum and silting down more or less sand from each side; and at times a strong current like that of a river is visible as the tide ebbs and flows. Wherever there is a bend in the canal you see the spars of big ships rising out of the sand as if they were crossing the desert by virtue of enchantment! About mid-way in this liquid high road, a broad flight of steps rises from the water's edge, and leads to a pretty mimic chateau, marking the place where the Empress Eugénie opened the canal.

Towards evening we entered the Gulf of Suez, and no sooner are we sighted from the harbour than native dhows come flying out like a regatta, laden to the gunwales with human freight. Boat upon boat surround us, till we wonder where all the human cargo is to be stowed away. It consisted of pilgrims bound for Mecca, who had arrived from all quarters of the East, and were now to be our fellow-voyagers as far as Jeddah. They were mostly poor types of the *genus homo*, low in physique, and seemingly corresponding in intellect. It had cost most of them the entire savings of their lives to accomplish this journey, coming as they did from Singapore, the Malay Peninsula, Ceylon, India, Southern Arabia, Zanzibar, the Valley of the Nile, Turkestan, and even Constantinople itself; but all were animated by the same burning fervour, believing if they once got within the walls of the sacred city they were sure of never-ending bliss hereafter. Each carried one or two brass dishes and a bag of cereals, along with an offering to present to their great prophet Mahomet. Some of the better off had mattresses to squat on *à la Turc*, and for

days they would sit thus, hookah in hand, with scarcely a few inches of space to vary their position, while we steamed down the Red Sea. Some, who could afford the expense of two wives, guarded them with jealous care, and seemed quite roused when any of the gentlemen passengers on the quarter-deck happened to look down in their direction. The wives, in some cases, were sisters, and yet seemed to be on most amicable terms, while their husbands killed time by rolling up cigarettes for each in turn.

Scarcely a square inch of deck could be seen, so huddled together were the family groups; and we got ample opportunity of sketching some of the extraordinary and incongruous mixtures of race, features, and expression that characterized the pilgrims.

Most faithfully did they fast from sunrise till sunset, relieving hunger and monotony only by smoking, sleeping, and talking. The decline of the sun, bringing return of animation from their heat stupor, gave the signal for action, and soon little charcoal fires glimmered over the deck, where *dal bhât* (rice and lentils) was being cooked with spice and oil for their evening meal, or a simpler repast of parched maize or rice was being partaken of; and again in the early morning they had a similar meal.

Near the top of the Red Sea, on the African side, we got a view of Mary's Mount, the supposed site where the Holy Family rested on their way down to Egypt; and on our left rose Mount Sinai in the distance, the memorable spot where the law was delivered to Moses, and which is believed to have originated the name of "Law" to so many conical hills in our own country. Some miles further on, the place is pointed out where the water formed into walls to allow the children of Israel to reach the Promised Land and escape from Pharaoh and his doomed hosts.

As we came nearer the tropics the sun became intensely hot, and from beneath our awning on the quarter-deck we could look down on the pilgrims below lying broiling in the heat, sound asleep, as if insensible to all temporal discomforts in the strength of their fanaticism. We, however, had some cause for anxiety which we could not equally ignore, in connection with our impromptu pilgrim freight. Crowded together as the pilgrims were, we daily dreaded to hear of pestilence or disease breaking out among them, and each day that lessened our distance from Jeddah lessened also our anxieties. Hardly less dreaded were their little fires on deck, considering the quantity of petroleum we had stored in the hold, where if but a spark fell we might soon be figuring, sky-rocket fashion, in mid-air. In discussing our dangers, one passenger rather wickedly remarked that if ever we reached land in safety, the least we could do would be to sacrifice one of the Jesuit missionaries on board in gratitude for our escape. These three Jesuits were Germans, and, prejudice apart, pleasant, well-informed men. It was whispered they had taken up a contract to convert all Bombay at so much a head,

and whatever might be the case they seemed in high spirits at the new field of labour before them. Being Jesuits they were even more popular with us toleration-loving Britons than with the Roman Catholic officers and crew of the ship, who had never a good word to say of them, but regarded them with jealousy and distrust. Before leaving Suez we had appealed to the agents about the unexpected pilgrim company and petroleum cargo that had been forced upon us, but the only reply we got was that they were too poor to refuse anything that came in their way—a view of the case which made us resolve that next time we voyaged through the Red Sea it would be *minus* pilgrims and petroleum.

When two days' sail off Jeddah the pilgrims began to overhaul their wardrobes, and produced snowy-white garments (the better off even to gloves) from out the nondescript bundles they carried. Indeed, some of the old women had dressed themselves days before, so as to be in full regimentals to do fitting honour to the first sight of the sacred land. Daily the pilgrims scanned the horizon for the longed-for shore, never tired of gazing in Jeddah's direction; and amusing it was when some of them, after gazing for hours as they thought towards Jeddah, were told that they were looking in the wrong direction. Some of the older Moslems looked so far spent that, even supposing they reached Mecca alive, it was doubtful if ever they would be able to regain their homes; but little cared they so long as they reached their goal alive. The presents they each and all carried to the temples varied according to their means. Some had coins and ornaments of gold and silver, but the poorer pilgrims carried only grain or anything they could easily spare—everything that could be turned into money being apparently acceptable to the priests of Mahomet. During the long days of scorching heat the Turks smoked their hookahs incessantly, filling the air with the heavy aromatic odour from the various spices of the tobacco.

At length Jeddah is sighted, and many solemn and reverential salaams does the unconscious land receive. We anchored about three miles from the town on account of the great coral reefs that lay all along the coast. A fleet of dhows soon surrounded us, and the pilgrims immediately began to bundle out, loading the boats down to the water's edge in their eager haste to be ashore. Hearing that the dreaded petroleum was fortunately to be landed here, and that we would be detained sometime coaling, we found we would have time enough to visit the town, which from the distance appeared snow-white and picturesque, like an Arabian-night's dream. The brilliant sun seemed to glitter on lofty palaces rising in terraces from the water's edge, while here and there a tall graceful palm reared high among them its dark green plumes. In the foreground the light blue sea shimmered over the coral beds, in the far background rose the dark dim range of rocks

that hide Mecca and bound the horizon; all seemed to wear a fairy-like appearance. Many circuitous tracks had we to make to escape the coral reefs, which every now and again we grazed harmlessly upon; some were just appearing above water, others, at all ranges of depth, rose into peaks and ridges of every style of graceful and fantastic outline.

As we neared the shore gradually the scene which first caught our eye began to change, and with the distance the illusion fled like a mirage, leaving before us the disenchanted reality. Here was no longer graceful palaces, but tawdry-looking rough square blocks of houses, of very gim-crack appearance, planted on the verge of an unbroken desert of sand, and the isolated palms looked as if they were wondering how on earth they had got there, and once there, however, they were managing to survive. The whole town was built of coral. Cut into large square blocks, they are placed so loosely together, with a sprinkling of sandy mortar between, that often daylight can be seen shining through; and it is a common saying that one heavy shower of rain would wash Jeddah into ruins, the entire absence of strong winds and rain being its salvation, and great excitement there was among the natives on the day of our arrival, by a threatening look of the clouds prospective of rain. A number of ill-favoured looking Arabs of every shade, from inky black upwards, gathered on the shore to watch our approach, and looked much surprised at seeing a lady's face with no attempt at concealment. Some of the more elderly, indeed, appeared to look on this as a grave offence, and the first engineer, who accompanied us, mentioned that on a former occasion they had even gone so far as to interfere with a lady who had been guilty of such impropriety! An angry pack of mongrels barked persistently at our heels as we landed, and we were glad of our body-guard of sailors armed with their oars to lay vigorously about them, inducing even the most incorrigible cur to keep a respectful distance.

We strolled leisurely through the bazaar, a long street canopied over with tattered mats as a slight protection from the baking sun, a protection of which the hornets and flies, equally with the Arabs, availed themselves. The principal goods exposed for sale on the stalls ranged on each side were hookahs, beads, and sweet-meats, the latter in the form of animals, mosques, ships, &c., the previous day having been a sugar festival. These confections were covered by fierce clouds of pugnacious hornets in possession that dared not be disputed, not to speak of black masses of flies that shared with them the spoil. Some native women passed through the bazaar with the usual long dark blue calico veils covering their faces, and, with the exception of two small apertures for their eyes, completely enveloping them. Down the centre of these overalls depended long strings of gold or silver coins, to show at a glance the wealth of the wearer. Hang-dog, greasy-

looking Moslems lounged and squatted by the sides of their stalls, all smoking hookahs as if it were the business of their lives, and looking as if we were taking a liberty in asking them to hand us their goods or accept payment for them. Emerging from this uninviting region of Arabs, greasy sweetmeats, mangy pariahs, hornets, flies, and dirt, we advanced, ankle-deep in sand, along a narrow street lined with high square houses, on the flat roofs of which the better-off class of women were to be seen promenading for air and exercise, their only means of obtaining these. A higher and whiter-looking house than the others marked out the British representative's, and we sent in our cards by an Arab porter standing at the entrance. Just inside the doorway was a tank for drinking-water, a scarce commodity and sometimes selling at the rate of even five shillings a gallon. This great necessity, or rather luxury here, can only be obtained by purchase, and that from one man, who leases at a high rental from his government the only wells allowed to be dug, and hawks the water round the streets in skins loaded upon camels and donkeys. The profits on this monopoly from the town, as well as from the immense stream of pilgrims for ever journeying on the Mecca route, must be considerable. Such is one of the ways by which the "Sublime Porte," as he is termed, replenishes his exchequer! It reminds one somewhat of the natives of India not being permitted to utilize the sea-water on their shores for the manufacture of that precious article salt, though, of course, between salt and drinking-water there is a wide gulf.

Presently the servant returned and conducted us up a series of steep stone stairs. While ascending these one felt in constant dread of treading too heavily or even leaning against the walls, in case of giving a shake that might bring the whole fabric toppling down, for every here and there daylight streamed through the walls in a way well to suggest the precaution. We never seemed to be coming to an end in our ascent, and still we mounted higher, still the walls grew more fragile. On one landing we noticed a number of office-rooms, filled with native clerks all busy writing, and on a higher, sleeping-rooms; but all the sitting-rooms were, we found, situated at the top of the house, to catch as much as possible of the higher and cooler air. At length we came to a halt, and were shown into a large eastern-looking apartment, where we were most hospitably received by the European resident. After a rest and refreshment we mounted yet another stair and found ourselves outside on the broad, flat roof of the house and the customary famous evening promenade of eastern cities. Here we got a wide and uninterrupted view all around. Seawards, the wavelets rippled over the coral reefs in the bay, where lay at anchor a Turkish man-of-war to protect the pilgrim interests, and a little further off we saw our ship loading and unloading. Away further out an occasional sail glanced in the sun of coasting ships or

native dhows, as they crossed to and from the African side; and rising out of the water we saw those terrible places of abode, the red-painted iron light-houses, like pillars of fire in the burning sun. Landwards, nothing but sand was visible as far as the eye could reach; not a tree, not a green speck to break the interminable waste. The long straight road to Mecca lay before us, white with pilgrims all eagerly pressing forwards over the weary forty miles that separated them from their goal.

Christians, it appears, are not allowed to set foot on this road, but one if not two Englishmen in disguise have risked the journey to the holy city, penetrated into its sacred places, and given us written accounts of their experiences. Just outside the town two solitary and daily-watered trees mark the supposed grave of Eve, and between these stands a little mosque, visited by numbers of Mecca pilgrims, who leave donations to the Moslem priest in charge.

By this time the air was getting heated and oppressive, and the strong light of noon nearly blinded us; for though it was October, one of Jeddah's cold months, if such an expression can be used, yet we were thankful to retreat downstairs to the cool, semi-darkened dining-room where tiffin awaited us. Luxurious lounges, settees, and scroll cane chairs with foot-rests were ranged around the room, where a cool coloured grass matting interwoven with tasteful designs covered the floor. Broad-leaved tropical plants, growing in large green tubs, imparted a refreshing air of coolness to the room, where the punkah swung vigorously over our heads. At the far end was the luncheon table, surrounded by the only straight-backed chairs we saw, and as we encircled the mahogany our wants were attended to by broad-faced grinning Arab boys. There was a tempting display of fruit in the centre of the table, suggesting mysterious thoughts as to whence it had come. Amid nothing but sea and sand, yet we had melons, grapes, pine-apples, plantains, oranges, pummeloes, and a variety of nuts, even to the hazel, of which several large boxes, we noticed, were landed out of our ship. Our meal consisted of eggs served up in various forms, cold chicken, tongue, &c., &c., and finally curry to wind up with. We would have fared badly, however, despite the abundance, but for the help of two servants, who kept up a continual switching over our heads with long grass dusters upon the hungry clouds of flies that pounced in dense black masses upon every article of food. Through the numerous glass windows and semi-closed venetians outside, we could look down on the camels and donkeys far below, toiling over the soft, sandy streets; and in shady corners natives enjoyed their mid-day siesta, not in the least disturbed by stray camels or dogs that came sniffing all around them or assumed the recumbent beside them. Men were going about laden with skins of water, selling it from door to door like milk, and occasionally a closely-veiled Egyptian or Arab girl hurried along as if ashamed to be seen in the open street.

As the afternoon advanced we had to think of returning to our quarters on board ship, and the tide being now high we got more quickly over the coral reefs, and reached our steamer just as she had been thoroughly cleansed and purified.

Two days more brought us to the foot of the Red Sea, where twelve rocks, termed the Twelve Apostles, are scattered close to the narrow straits of the "Gate of Tears," Babelmandeb, causing great anxiety to the captain till we had cleared them and rounded into the Arabian Sea. A few hours more found us lying off Aden. Hidden behind a long bare ridge of rocks, only custom house, shipping and agents' offices, &c., appear from the sea, and you see people, camels, and vehicles threading their way among the dark bare rocks to the town behind. No sooner did we anchor about half a mile from shore than a little fleet of cockle-shell canoes, each with one occupant, came dancing out over the waves, and surrounded us. The owners had come to dive for buxeese, which was their trade, and seemingly only means of livelihood. Any of them could easily have carried his boat under his arm; and when jostled and upset it was emptied again in a trice by the owner as he floated alongside and then scrambled into it again. The passengers amused themselves by throwing small silver coins into the water and watching them dive, and this sometimes they did from great heights off the rigging, reappearing after a long interval, lively as ever, and in possession of the coin. To save time they sometimes dived right below the steamer to reach coins that had been suddenly dropped from the other side to test their racing powers; and occasionally they would vary the monotony of sitting in their canoes by swimming behind while they pushed them on before them, among the different ships lying at anchor. Nothing could be more at home in the tepid water than these uncouth black, African-Arab boys. Another group of natives now boarded us, carrying bunches of magnificent ostrich feathers for sale at most tempting prices, and others brought coral jewellery, scented wood ornaments, necklaces of Jerusalem camel bones, crosses of Lebanon cedars, and wristlets of threaded shells, all of which were so familiar in the late Forestry Exhibition in Edinburgh.

On shore we found that water was even a greater luxury than at Jeddah, not because of an interdict on digging wells, but because the water being brackish is little used for drinking except by the poorer natives, while the European supply is daily distilled from the sea. A place more barren of vegetation it is impossible to conceive, and rain therefore is nearly as rare as at Jeddah, a shower being an occurrence of every three or four years. Goats, which are supposed to exist on anything and under any conditions, are all they have to depend on for fresh milk and butter.

One of the sights of the town is the reservoirs, adapted from the natural hollows and clefts in the high black rocks overlooking Aden, and which are fitted up to collect and retain every drop of

rain-water that trickles down from the wide area above. Close by them is quite a refreshing little garden of shrubs and plants, carefully watered twice a day, and fondly termed the "Botanical Gardens"—a favourite evening resort and promenade of the residents. So great is the heat of Aden, lying between the heated sea on the one hand and the background of heated rocks on the other, that it is a place to get out of and not into. Notwithstanding all this it is said to be very healthy for a tropical climate.

Leaving Aden we made straight for Bombay across the Arabian Sea, which all the time was like a vast smooth lake. As we anchor before the great Eastern city, so beautifully situated amid rich tropical vegetation, so clean and handsome, and so remarkable for the varied concourse of different race and nationality, our sea-voyage reaches its termination.

M. A. S.

A DOUBLE EVENT; OR, 200 TO 1.

"YES, these used to be my quarters in the old days when I ran up to town from Aldershot. Ah, those were cheery times. By Jove! it's just as well one can't see ghosts of the future; it would have given me rather a start then, if I had looked out of the window and seen myself as I am now, at my billet at the corner."

The speaker was the proprietor of the crossing at the corner of Powder Street, St. James's. He was sitting in my chamber in Powder Street smoking his short black pipe and drinking some whiskey and water.

Since I first came to live in Powder Street I had often as I passed his crossing wondered what this man's history had been. He was a man who had obviously seen better days, and yet was able to bear his fallen fortunes with philosophy, if not with resignation. Probably he ought to have been in the prime of his life, but his long drooping moustache had more white hairs than black in it, and his worn face and bent figure told a tale of hard times. His clothes were wonderfully old and tattered, but they looked as if they had been originally made for him, and had once been the fine feathers of a fine bird, while his battered shapeless old hat had something about it which suggested that it had been the work of a good maker. He never asked for alms with a cadger's whine, but he would remind the passers-by of his claims upon them by an easy gesture, much as one who was playing at loo would remind another player who had forgotten to do so to put into the pool. I used to notice that he usually had a little volume in his hand, which when business was slack he would intently peruse. At first I thought that it was some book of devotion. I am afraid I put down his motive in reading it to a desire to gain the good-will of the pious, though the passers-by were as a rule not much in that way inclined; but when I had a closer look upon one occasion I saw that it was a *Ruff's Guide to the Turf*. After a time I usually used to have some conversation with him when I passed, it was generally about the same subject, racing, and I found out that he was a very earnest student of public form, and that there were few big races on which some of the takings of the Powder Street crossing were not wagered. Although in the body he was present at the Powder Street crossing, in the spirit he was on Newmarket Heath, or at Ascot, or Epsom, or wherever the races might be going on, and he would always enjoy a talk about the last meeting

with any one who had been there. It was after I had come back from a Newmarket meeting that I asked him to come up to my chambers and discuss the doings there, over some whiskey and water. Rather queer company for me to keep, some people—my father the Dean of Bungay—would say; but I was always rather unconventional in my tastes, and I could not help having something like a fellow-feeling for one to whom the Turf had such strange fascination. It was on that occasion that he recognized the rooms, and this, and perhaps the whiskey and water, made him communicative and induced him to tell me something of his life.

"Yes, it was a confounded dream that sent me wrong," he said; "it must have come from the devil; I wish he would send me another one like it, by Jove, though. It was when I was at an army crammer's that I had it. Up to that time I had never gambled a bit or had any interest in a race except to have a shilling or two in a sweep. It was a few days before the Derby, and the other fellows were always talking about it, so I knew the horses' names though I took little or no interest in the race.

"Well, one night I had a dream. I dreamt I saw the Derby run and won, and then I went to sleep and dreamt again, and by Jove, sir, that time I dreamt the Oaks. I had never been to Epsom then, but in my sleep I saw the grand stand, and the hill, and the Corner, as I have so often seen them since. I remembered the names of the horses I had seen win in my dream, and the next day I told the other fellows of it, and my description of what I had seen was so vivid that they were wonderfully taken by it and would have it that I must back my luck. I did; I had a tanner on the double event. I took the odds from a good man. A thousand to ten he laid me, and all the other fellows backed it for a sovereign or two as well. We all went to see that Derby and Oaks. The crammer saw that we were so much interested in the races that we might as well be at Epsom as in his study, for all the good we should do in getting ready for our exams, so he didn't make much trouble about our going. Well, it was just like seeing something I had seen before, and the races came off just as they did in my dream, and when the numbers went up after the Oaks I had won my thousand pounds.

"I got paid all right, but the money did not do me much good. It went a short time after I had got my commission, and it left with a gambling devil in me which will never be sent out. I liked my regiment and the service well enough, only I liked racing better; I had one or two horses of my own in training, and what with backing them and other men's it did not take me very long to go to grief. The wonder is that I lasted as long as I did, but my father died about that time and I had the old place to gamble away. Well, it went; our people had owned it since Henry the II.'s reign. They kept it all through the troubles in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, when they staked and lost much for the Stuarts, but I lost it over one St. Leger, and my commission and all I had but a few hundreds. With what I had left I went out to the colonies, to seek my fortune, and I didn't do so badly in South Africa, where I went; I had an ostrich farm out there, and was doing rather well, but even out there they have some sort of racing. It is a miserable dog-eat-dog game, every one trying to do every one else, and the robberies are even more barefaced than they are at home. But such as it was I took to it and at that wretched business I got broke again. After that I had a pretty hard time doing first one thing and then another; at one time I was in the mounted police force and I got maimed, losing some fingers, as you see, in a row with some bush-men. Then a relation died leaving me a little money and I came home again. Well, my experience ought to have kept me straight, then, you will say; my experience was just as useful to me as it is to nine men out of ten—I did exactly what I had done before and took to the Turf again. Yes, with exactly the same result, for again I was left without a penny, worse off than I had ever been before, for I was dead broke in England, the worst country in the world to get anything to do in. I hadn't any one to help me, for I had worn out my relations' patience and my friends'. If you come to grief you will find out how many friends you make while you are knocking about spending your money. Well, I had the experience that many a poor devil has had, and will have, answering advertisements and finding out they were all swindles or not meant for men like I was; I spent a few shillings in sticking one in for myself. By Jove, the answers that I got! Answers from money-lenders offering me terms to tout for them, answers from men who live by getting the last sovereigns some poor wretch has who has been made reckless by trouble. I got one from a clergyman who offered for five pounds to introduce me to the squire of his parish, who, he thought, would take me as a tutor for his boys. At last I got a billet, the one I have now. The man who had it before me had been in my troop in the old regiment, and when I passed by the crossing he recognized me. He had been rather a bad lot in the regiment, but I had done him some kindness and he hadn't forgotten it. He was as civil and respectful to me as if he thought that I wore a bad hat and ragged coat from choice, and I didn't look as if I often forgot to dine. He told me that he was not doing badly, and that he had laid by a little, only the weather told on him as his lungs were bad, and it ended in my taking the crossing from him to work on half shares. I daresay he must have thought it rather a queer job for his old captain to take to, but one who knows London street life as a crossing-sweeper does has seen queerer starts than that; certainly he didn't say much, but seemed glad of the chance of getting a straight man to work for him. He is dead now, and the crossing belongs to me; I don't

do so badly taking one day with another, and though it is hardly the work I should choose, there are lots of men who have had better positions than I ever had whom I don't envy; but the worst of it is, what I make all goes over some race or the other, for I have such bad luck, and the queer thing is, that though I seldom think of anything but races when I am awake, and haven't for all these years, I have never had another dream of one," concluded the sweeper, and he finished his whiskey and water and relit his short black pipe and in a few minutes he was talking about the horse which must win the Goodwood Stakes, with as much confidence as if he had been the most undefeated of plungers.

When I came back from my holidays that year I found my friend still at his crossing, but I noticed that he seemed rather out of spirits, and he used to have rather a dejected air as he coned his *Ruff's Guide* and smoked his short black pipe. It was not because he had lost money on the Leger, for which I had a fellow-feeling for him—that he took as a matter of course; nor was it because the winter was coming on, though that was enough to depress a delicate man who had to get his living in the open air; what worried him was the autumn handicaps—for once he was unable to come to a conclusion satisfactory to himself as to what would win. The fact that the conclusions he had arrived at before had almost always been wrong did not make this state of uncertainty less annoying to him.

"I can't get the hang of it anyhow," he would say; "the form of the year is all of a tangle;" and he would go into a long discussion about weights and performances. I must say I felt rather glad of this, and hoped for once that the earnings of the Powder Street crossing would remain in its proprietor's pocket. But he was by no means pleased, his hobby-horse had failed him, and with a bothered expression he read his *Ruff's Guide* and tried to unravel the tangled skein of public form.

However, one morning when I was in my chambers the servant of the house came up, with rather an indignant expression on her face, and said that there was a man below who wanted to see me. "I think, sir," she answered to my question as to who he was, "he is the party as sweeps the crossing at the corner, and from his manner I fancy as he has had something to drink. I told him as you never would wish to see the likes of him, but he wouldn't go away." "Show him up," I said, and the servant left the room saying that she would tell him to come up, with an expression of scorn which told me that she thought if I had no proper pride, she had. In a few seconds the crossing-sweeper came into the room and from his appearance I formed much the same opinion that the servant had. His face was haggard with excitement, and he seemed to be trembling all over.

"I have got them, I have got them!" he said as he came in.

"Yes, you look as if you had them rather badly. I didn't know you drank."

"Don't laugh at me, I have the winners of the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire—a dead certainty for a double event."

"Oh, that is all," I said without much excitement, for I had no great faith in the sweeper's tips.

"I tell you it is a certainty; I have had another dream. 'Matadore' wins the Cesarewitch, and a horse wins the Cambridgeshire whose name I don't know."

"That is just it," I answered; "we all know that, but we don't know the name."

"Yes, but I should know the horse again, and the colours, and the boy who rode; he wore a black cap, green jacket, red spots."

"Green and red spots! what beastly colours. But now you say so, by Jove, I know them!" I exclaimed. "They are Joe Levi's, that little thief of a Jew who keeps the public house in the Haymarket and has a few platers training with John Holmes."

"There, I told you so," he cried excitedly. "Let us see what Levi has in the Cambridgeshire; it was a black horse I saw win."

I sent for a sporting paper and got a calendar, and I found that Mr. Levi's black horse, the "Crow," was entered for the Cambridgeshire. He was in at six stone—a nice light weight for a five-year-old—and I saw that he had been backed at long odds. The crossing-sweeper was delighted. "At last my luck is going to turn. After all these years I have had another dream. Remember, when I dream I win," he exclaimed. "'Matadore' and the 'Crow,' they ought to give us long odds."

I remember having seen the "Crow" run at Bromley; he was a beast of a horse, probably the worst horse in training, I thought, and I tried to persuade the sweeper against believing there was anything in it, but it was useless to make any such attempt. There was no doubt about the horse, as I was sure about the colours, and it was the only horse Levi had in the race; and as for it having no chance, some one thought it had, for was it not being backed, though at very long odds? He felt strangely confident in his dream coming off and nothing I could say shook his confidence. It ended in my catching a good deal of his excitement, though I determined only to back his dream for a sovereign. The sweeper, however, was not so cautious, everything he had was to go on it, and he even sold his crossing, so that he could back his dream to win a large sum of money. We got fairly long odds—two hundred to one—the sweeper taking the odds to forty pounds, while I had a pound on. I never thought much about it after I made the bet, but the sweeper became an altered man. He still kept his crossing, as he had arranged to do that until the day of the Cambridgeshire; but he was restless and began to hate and feel ashamed of his life. "Not much more of this," he would say to

me as I passed by. "I hope none of these fellows who pass by will know me again when I have my money."

I did not go to the Cesarewitch that year; I had got tired of going to races, and sick with myself for wasting so much time and money on a pursuit which perhaps might take the same hold upon me that it had upon the sweeper. On the day of the race, however, I waited with some anxiety at the club for the telegram. "Matadore" had always been backed a good deal, and left off the night before first favourite, so I was fairly hopeful that the first event of our double event would come off. Sure enough, "Matadore" was the name I saw on the telegram, and I at once started out to tell the sweeper of our good luck. He took the good news wonderfully quietly. "I knew it," he said, "just as if I had seen the race; in fact, I have seen the race, and so I have the Cambridgeshire." That day the "Crow" began to be backed a good deal at Newmarket, and its price began to shorten. I wanted the sweeper to hedge and make certain of a good sum of money, but he refused to do so; in fact, if he had any money I believe he would have gone on backing it. He seemed to be perfectly confident that he would win, and began to talk of what he would do with his money as if he had already had it. He would talk about what he would do that winter, whether he would hunt in Leicestershire, or go to the South of France.

I went down to Newmarket to see the Cambridgeshire. The only bet I had on the race was the two hundred pounds I stood to win on the "Crow," and I began to feel half hopeful that I should win this money, which would be very useful to me, as I was hard up and in debt. As I read the papers in the train I saw that the "Crow's" price had come up to 20 to 1, and I noticed that the sporting prophets, who had at first howled at the idea of such a brute having a chance, now spoke much more guardedly. When I got into the inclosure some one touched me on the shoulder, and I heard a husky voice whisper in my ear, "Mr. Langdale, I've been a looking for you heverywhere; there is one you must back for the Cambridgeshire." The man who spoke to me was one of those hangers-on to the turf who get their living by haunting racecourse and training quarters and picking up bits of information, which they retail to their patrons. Sometimes he really did know something. Often he made sure of hitting on the winner by giving each horse in the race to one or other of his patrons. This day he refused to be repulsed by my telling him that I did not mean to back anything. I must have his information: he said he had given it to all his gentlemen; it was good, real good, and lowering his voice to a husky whisper, he said two words, the "Crow." "Yes, sir," he continued in a second or two, "it's the best thing as ever I 'ad; better than 'Cock Robin' for the Chester Cup as I put you on to; not put you on—well, as I put a lot o' my gents on to. Now look 'ere, this is true," he added

sorrowfully, as one who has a great truth to impart, but whose known character for mendacity stands in his way: "My brother Bill, he is in John Holmes's stable where the 'Crow,' is trained, and I was down there last night and see'd Bill, and he told me about it."

"Well, what did he say?" I asked, telling him that I had backed the "Crow" already, but that I would give him a pound or so if it won.

"Well, sir, Bill let me know as it was a real good thing, and that they are certain of it, and he would have told me more only John Holmes comes up and catches him talking to me. He has an awful temper has John Holmes, and he didn't like Bill talking to me, for he know'd me, so he unchains the stable dog and sets it at me, and then he goes for Bill. As I hooks it away from the dog I hears Bill howling out. If Master Holmes knew Bill as well as I do I don't think he would care to knock him about as he did, for Bill ain't one to stand it quiet. But there, sir, you stick to what you have on the 'Crow,' and put a bit more on too," and the tout shuffled off to look for another of "his gents."

"Well, so far so good," I thought to myself. I did not feel very much confidence in the tout; still I thought that he seemed very much in earnest about what he had told me, and I could not help believing that there was something in it, and I certainly could not help hoping that there might be, for I wanted the two hundred for myself badly enough, and I could not but feel a great interest in the fortunes of my friend the sweeper. There was a horse trained by Knight which they were backing as they used to back red-hot favourites from that stable, and there was an Irish horse the sharps were all on, and Billy Nous, the big north-country bookmaker, had a mare on which it is said that he would win a fortune. The "Crow's" price was 100 to 6, and though there were some people always ready to lay those odds, there seemed to be money in the market to back it; and I was not surprised at this, for the people connected with Holmes's stable, though they were a very shady lot and men of more than doubtful character, always found money for their good things. Billy Nous seemed never to be tired of laying against the "Crow," and this I did not much like, for he had a reputation for not often making a dead set against a horse unless he knew something; still I had begun to be very hopeful. As I walked from the stand to the side of the course I saw the sweeper; he looked livid, jaded, and ill—worse than I had ever seen him before.

"I could not stand it any longer," he said to me, "so I came down to see the race. I hadn't enough money, so I had to walk a good bit of the way. I have said good-bye to the crossing, and have given it up."

"Poor fellow! What will he do for a living if it don't come off?" I thought.

When he saw the "Crow" he looked a good deal happier. "That's all right," he said; "it's the horse I saw in my dream, and the same boy; you see the dream is all right."

After that he did not seem at all troubled by the anxiety of Billy Nous, who was near us, to lay against the horse. I thought the "Crow" looked very much improved, and though he was an ugly brute, he could stride along.

They got off altogether after only one false start. Some horse whose name I did not know made the running for a bit. As they came nearer there was a cry of "The favourite is beat!" and Billy Nous's mare, "Our Emma," looked like a winner, but I saw the "Crow" coming up.

"'Our Emma' wins!" they were shouting out, when I heard the harsh voice of a well-known sporting baronet shout, "What is that black horse coming up? The 'Crow'!" and the 'Crow' wins!"

"No, he don't; my mare wins, 'Our Emma.' An even five hundred 'Our Emma!'" shouted Billy Nous.

The baronet had just time to take the bet, and it was clear that the "Crow" must win; and he did by two lengths, "Our Emma" second.

As the horses passed the post I looked at the sweeper. He had turned pale and was very queer, and when, in a second or two, he spoke, there was a catch in his breath. "Just what I saw—and then I woke up—just what I saw. Well, you see my dream was all right," he said; and then, after he had thought for a second or two, he asked me to lend him some money, so that he could go and get something to eat at Jarvis's, for though he had eight thousand to draw on Monday, he had not sixpence until then. I lent him a fiver, and he went to get something to eat, while I went back to the inclosure. As soon as I got there I saw that something was wrong. The ready-money bookmakers would not pay over the "Crow." Nobody at first knew what it was about, but there was an objection lodged by Mr. Nous, the owner of the second. For some time all was confusion, and all sorts of rumours were going, but the general opinion was that there was something very wrong. "S'help me, I shan't go near 'em. It's all up; that imp of a boy has split—he's been and told Billy Nous. There will be heaps of proof against us. It's all your fault for hammering him so. I shall clear."

A string of oaths was the only answer, and as I looked round I saw that they were Joe Levi and Jack Holmes, the owner and trainer of the "Crow." They seemed to be making off. Soon I heard that the stewards wanted to see these gentlemen, and that they were not to be found. Then I met a friend of mine who, on a racecourse, always knew exactly what was going on. This very astute friend of mine was also good-natured, and when I told him that I had backed the "Crow," he let me know what was going on.

"Backed the 'Crow,' did you? Well, I shouldn't talk too loud about it. I am afraid that you have not the slightest chance of getting your money. The race must be given to 'Our Emma.' It is about the biggest swindle since the Running Rein case. The horse which won wasn't the 'Crow,' at all. It seems Levi got hold of a French horse exactly like the 'Crow,' only a good one instead of a bad one, and he has won with it. The boy, who knew all about it, has rounded on them. It seems Holmes, the trainer, thought that it was a nice safe amusement to beat the boy almost to death last night, though he knew enough against him to send him to penal servitude, and so Mr. Holmes's wild beast's temper has upset the apple cart. You ought to have backed 'Our Emma;' I did," said my friend, and he bustled off to get more information. He was rightly informed. In a short time every one knew all about it, and I shall never forget the scene of excitement that ensued when every one heard of the swindle that had almost been successful. There was no doubt about it, and there were men on the course able to identify the horse that won. It would have gone hard with Messrs. Levi and Holmes if the crowd had got at them, but they were not to be found. So much for my two hundred. And the sweeper—poor old chap—his dream had indeed brought him to grief. It had come to pass right enough, but he had woke up too soon—he ought to have dreamt about the objection. What was he to do? Well, he had my fiver, and though they were getting scarce I did not grudge it him.

As I left the inclosure I saw a crowd of people round a man who had fallen down. Some one, who looked like a doctor, told them to keep away, and give the man air. I came up, and recognized the fallen man. It was the sweeper. He probably had been one of the last men on the heath to hear about the objection.

When he had finished his dinner he had walked back to the side of the course, smoking his short black pipe, and thinking of the good time he would have. Then he had heard of the objection, and learnt that his dream had been a will-o'-the-wisp, which had led him to utter ruin. There must have been always something wrong with him, for the bad news had been too much for him, and he had fallen down in a fit or something. The doctor looked at him, felt at his pulse and then at his heart, looked grave, and said, "He is dead." As I looked down at him I noticed that his pockets had been turned inside out. Some one had already secured the change of my fiver, and he lay on Newmarket Heath dead and cleaned out.

D. BELGRAVE.

TO E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DIARY OF A PLAIN GIRL."

THE mountains in fantastic lines
Sweep, blue-white, to the sky, which shines
Blue as blue gems; athwart the pines
The lake gleams blue.

We three were here, three years gone by;
Our poet, with fine-frenzied eye,
You, steeped in learned lore, and I
A poet too.

Our Poet brought us books and flowers,
He read us "Faust;" he talked for hours
Philosophy (sad Schopenhauer's),
Beneath the trees:

And do you mind that sunny day,
When he, as on the sward he lay,
Told of Lassalle who bore away
The false Louise?

Thrice-favoured bard! to him alone
That green and snug retreat was shown,
Where, to the vulgar herd unknown,
Our pens we plied.

(For, in those distant days, it seems,
We cherished sundry idle dreams,
And with our flowing foolscap reams
The Fates defied.)

And after, when the day was gone,
And the hushed, silver night came on,
He showed us where the glow-worm shone;—
We stooped to see.

There, too, by yonder moon we swore
Platonic friendship o'er and o'er;
No folk, we deemed, had been before
So wise and free!

* * * * *
And do I sigh or smile to-day?
Dead love or dead ambition, say,
Which mourn we most? Not much we weigh
Platonic friends.

On you the sun is shining free;
Our Poet sleeps in Italy,
Beneath the alien sod; on me
The cloud descends.

AT THE FOOT OF THE MATTERHORN.

AT different times various localities on the Continent seem by popular consent to become favourite resorts. Last year the tide rolled towards Zermatt. The Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, the Archbishop of Canterbury—besides many hundreds of tourists enjoying less celebrity—made their way to the foot of the Matterhorn.

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“I liked — immensely,” a gentleman once said to me after returning from his annual holiday; and when asked as to what were its particular attractions, he replied promptly, “Because it was so easy to get away from.”

This cannot be said of Zermatt. To be taken ill at Zermatt means being obliged to remain there till you are well,—or well enough to bear being carried down to Visp. The railway comes to Visp, and it is from there the journey to Zermatt is generally made. Even at Lausanne we were told there was a carriage road all the way from Visp to Zermatt, but this was a mistake. There ought to be a carriage road, and a fairly good one might easily be made, but the natives won't permit it, as another canton would then share the profits of the summer harvest, and the porters, guides, and muleteers be thrown out of work.

From Visp, as far as St. Nicholas, there are three modes of progression open to the traveller—either to walk, to ride on a mule, or be carried in a *chaise à porteur*. The first is, of course, the best and most independent way, but every one can't take long walks up steep ascents, and may yet desire to see beautiful scenery, so they have to ride or be carried. This last is undoubtedly an expensive amusement. To take you over the ten miles between Visp and St. Nicholas you have to hire four or six men to each chair, at six francs a head, with a compulsory extra franc per man as a *pourboire*, whilst anything beyond you may feel inclined to give is left to your generosity. The porters hardly ever understand either French or English, so, however much you may desire to do so, you are completely cut off from the possibility of saying anything to them, as they only understand a *patois* German. A mule or horse to ride costs twelve francs, a baggage mule twelve francs, a porter six; so it is easy to be seen that a large family going up to Zermatt—provided they don't walk—leave a good deal of money on the road. The hotel-keepers find the porters, mules, horses, &c., and get a considerable

percentage out of the profits. One porter, who carried the small baggage, said that only one franc out of the six came to him; and when asked why he did not stand out for a better arrangement, or make one on his own account, replied, in that case he would not be allowed to hang about the hotels, and so would get no work at all given him to do.

Stalden is the first halt after leaving Visp, on the way to Zermatt. There is nothing remarkable about Stalden, except that it has a very steep mule path up to it and for some way above it. I believe the hotel enjoys a reputation for damp sheets. One can only wonder there are ever any other than damp sheets in the remote villages of Switzerland, should the season not happen to be a particularly dry one. There is no means of airing linen except in the sun, the fires being all of wood logs, so unless the stock is unparalleled in quantity, or that the sheets are only re-folded and not re-washed for the use of every fresh traveller, the obvious deduction is they must always have just come out of the wash-tub.

"I hope the sheets are aired," I once said to an obliging chamber-maid of the sterner sex, and he assured me, with effusion, I might be quite easy, as they had been out of doors all day, and a fine air blew through the rooms after the beds were made. Since that I have naturally taken them on trust.

Some people, when they travel, carry their own sheets, towels, and even pillows and pillow-cases; but these fastidious persons would do well to remain at home. Luggage is the *bête noire* of all tourists, and is constantly being left behind as too heavy and expensive to drag about,—hand-bags and parcels being substituted, containing only what is absolutely necessary. The really independent way to travel in Switzerland is to carry only a light portmanteau. This goes in the carriage with you on all the railways. There is no delay, no registering of baggage, and no extra expense.

To be burdened by house linen, added to the ordinary wardrobe, would make a toil of a pleasure—I mean, of course, for the ordinary tourist, who has no courier, valet, or lady's maid. Travelling must always entail a certain degree of risk, against which it is impossible to arm yourself; so if you ever mean to leave home, it is the wisest way not to think of it. I have lately heard of several big hotels in Paris where the beds which had already been slept in were first sprinkled with water from a watering-can, after which a warming-pan was passed lightly over the sheets just to give them that air of smooth freshness so delightful to the tired traveller. With increased appreciation do we bow to that time-honoured old proverb—"that where ignorance is bliss, &c."

After Stalden, the next halt on the road to Zermatt is St. Nicholas. Here you dismiss the mules, horses, porters—indeed,

the whole staff—and hire a carriage for the remainder of the journey. I don't know if it is fair to coach-builders to call the vehicle a carriage; anyhow it's a conveyance, though of a miserably uncomfortable description—a hooded one-horse chaise, with no springs worth mentioning, and no room for your knees, so that you are more comfortable if you sit sideways. The road is only a little better than the mule-path, and has great ruts and hollows, into which you are plunged, and out of which you are jolted in a manner no decent carriage could stand. By the time you arrive at Zermatt all your bones ache. The magnificence of the scenery has been quite lost upon you. Even the first view of the Matterhorn inspires no enthusiasm. Your only desire is to reach the hotel, after nine hours' hard travelling over a distance of not much more than twenty-two miles.

Zermatt lies at the foot of the Matterhorn, five thousand three hundred and fifteen feet above sea-level, and yet it stands in a valley. There are forests all around it, or rather pine-clad slopes. Lofty mountain peaks rise tier above tier, crowned by the huge rock-pyramid of the stupendous Matterhorn, and the Théodule glacier seems actually to reach down into the village. From Zermatt the ascent is made to the Riffelberg and Gornergrat, from which latter point a splendid view may be obtained of snow-peaks and glaciers—of Mont Rosa, the Rothhorn, the Weisshorn. At the foot of the Riffelberg winds the immense Gorner glacier.

Except, of course, during the tourist season, no more desolate region can well be imagined than Zermatt, lying as it does in the very heart of the Alps. The season begins in June and ends in September. The hotels are then closed for the winter, and a depth of snow two yards high blocks the village street, completely covering up the lower windows. Except in the towns, Switzerland literally hibernates for the winter months. The food and fuel have been stored up during the summer, and it must be mere existence, not life, these poor peasants suffer out. The cattle are brought down from the heights and have to be looked after and fed, and carving in wood helps the guides to earn sufficient money for their limited wants.

They are a healthy people, these Swiss mountaineers, and, except in the valleys, fever is almost unknown. A young girl carrying a portmanteau on her back will cheerfully tramp with it over the mountains for a distance of ten miles, only resting now and again by the roadside. The young women of Switzerland are fresh and comely, but an old Swiss woman, with her yellow parchment-like skin, mapped out, through exposure to all weathers, by hundreds of deep dark lines, and having the addition of a huge goitre hanging half way down her chest, is a sight to shudder at. A Swiss woman is evidently regarded by her husband as a beast of burden, and the result is premature old age.

Idiots and people suffering from goitre are numerous in Swit-

zerland—the latter said to be owing to drinking snow water, the former to constant intermarriage. They are not, however, above making a market out of their calamities. Stopping once in a public *diligence* at a small town between Chamounix and Geneva, the street was literally lined by horrible objects picturesquely grouped so as to attract attention and obtain pity. Women with enormous goitres held up big-headed idiots in their arms—creatures who made hideous and inhuman noises that reminded you of a menagerie. Nearly every one threw them money,—not so much for charity as to prevent their nearer approach.

Mr. Seiler is the great man of Zermatt. He owns the three hotels, Mont Rosa—his original venture—Mont Cervin, and the Zermatt. Half way up the Riffel he has another hotel, and on the heights yet another—the Riffelberg. He is like the Marquis of Carabas, he owns everything. In the early days of the world he would have been a chief or a king, so great is his talent for organization. Report says he clears ten thousand a year by these five hotels, but I don't suppose any one but Mr. Seiler knows the truth. He has his own cattle, and imports his own food. The food at a Swiss mountain hotel does not provoke the appetite, but the air is supposed to feed you, and no doubt the hotel manager takes this into consideration. The ordinary *table d'hôte* breakfast is the same all over Switzerland—tea, coffee, or chocolate, bread and butter, and honey. The honey is not the genuine product of the bees, but a manufactured article made principally from pear juice, and sold by the barrel. It is a clear, gum-like substance, and many people appreciate it.

The getting provisions up to the mountain heights is not an easy affair, since everything has to be carried, or brought on the backs of mules—indeed, the wonder is how so many people can procure enough to eat. Though the food may not be very tempting it is fairly wholesome; and if it were better, the tourist would lose the privilege of grumbling at it, and every one knows how dear that privilege is. He grumbles at the wet table napkins, at the delays between the courses, at the German opposite who will swallow his knife every time he puts food into his mouth, and because this suicidal propensity on the part of that nation obliges the Swiss hotel-keeper to have his cutlery so blunted that no one can cut anything. He grumbles at his fellow-travellers, at the weather, and declares, at least twenty times a day, that he wishes himself back in his own comfortable home.

"I don't think much of your Mount Blank—nor of your glaziers," an American once said to me at Chamounix, "and I shall be tarnation glad to put my feet back on my own doorstep," but no doubt he went right around again next year.

Retrospective travelling is, however, a great pleasure when a man tramps in imagination over the mountains, sitting comfortably by his fireside. The discomforts are forgotten, only the pleasant

memories remain, the *éclat* of having been. The air of Switzerland renews the health, it has a wonderful effect on the overtired brain. There is no tonic like it, especially for business and professional men.

In the year 1884 the cholera scare spoilt the Swiss season; but in 1885 almost every hotel in the high Alps was crowded, and at Zermatt the Seiler family had to fit up sleeping rooms over the stables, in the sitting or billiard rooms,—anywhere so as not to send the tired traveller back to St. Nicholas.

Zermatt is, perhaps, a little disappointing for those who do not venture further than Zermatt itself. It is essentially a centre for mountain climbing, and regarded from this standpoint possesses every advantage. When the weather is fine and the atmosphere clear, a magnificent view of the Matterhorn may be had, and the valley looking towards St. Nicholas, with the river Visp winding through it, is bold and picturesque; but you are confined and shut in on all sides, and there are no walks except across the meadows or by the river side. The village offers few attractions, and one hardly realizes the population is placed at 492 souls, but doubtless this includes the valley. There is a post office at Zermatt, a telegraph office, and a few tiny shops, all evidently opened for the convenience of the tourists. In these shops you can buy a miscellaneous collection of things, including coloured spectacles for the snow heights, green veils, tins for holding wild flowers, stray editions of Tauchnitz novels, photographs, cards with *edelweiss* mounted on them, and huge bundles of alpenstocks. No less than three shoemakers seem to drive a flourishing trade.

Hanging about the rough, uneven lane, which does duty for the street, or sitting idly on the wall, there are usually groups of men waiting to be hired. The guides may be known by their picturesque wide-brimmed felt hats, having an eagle's feather in them, by their leather gaiters, strong nailed boots, and by the coils of rope over their arms, and the ice axes in their hands.

Up and down the street are perpetually passing and repassing long processions of tourists going to or returning from the Riffel Alp and Riffelberg hotels. Sitting outside the Hotel Mont Rosa one can be well amused, even by watching a mule being loaded. It is quite wonderful what burdens a mule can carry. The wooden saddle is balanced by a portmanteau on either side, a huge trunk crowns the top, held there by ropes tightly secured, whilst the interstices are cleverly filled in with bundles of rugs, small bags, waterproofs, and umbrellas. When, at last, the mule gets under weigh, nothing is to be seen of him but his head, the end of his tail, and four thin legs. The action of a mule is unpleasant and very trying to many riders; but they are immensely strong, and far more sure-footed than a horse, picking their way over the rough stones with all the care and caution of a cat.

The most dreary experience of Zermatt is, of course, on a wet

day. Hotels high up in the mountains are not made to live in, but only to sleep in. On a really hopelessly wet-day a number of people, in the absence of any chance of securing the only two arm-chairs in the *salon*, retire to their own rooms and turn their beds into temporary sofas. There is a rush to secure a book to read out of the hotel library,—a heterogeneous collection of works in French, English, and German, left behind by previous tourists. The first volume is invariably missing—no one ever finds the first volume of any book. The papers are of ancient date, the piano out of tune.

A few enterprising spirits hang about the road in mackintoshes and take a stroll by the river under umbrellas. Returning to the shelter of the hotel they leave little streams of water on the doorstep, as they stand there gazing up into the clouds in the direction where the Matterhorn is known to be, though hidden from them by a pall of steamy white vapour. Men have a better chance of passing their time agreeably than the ladies, for whilst the latter have only the poor consolation of writing letters in the privacy of their own rooms, or making a cup of tea over a travelling Etna, the men crowd into the general smoking room, and enveloped by thick fumes of tobacco, tell racy stories, or vaunt of personal experiences in difficult mountaineering. It may be as well to mention that no one believes in these experiences, though every one listens to them.

Sometimes, after a day of enforced idleness, when a good deal of superfluous energy has to be got rid of, dancing in the evening is proposed. No room is better fitted for this pastime than the big uncarpeted *salon* of a Swiss hotel. The chairs and tables are quickly run into corners, and provided any one can be found who remembers some dance music, and is willing to be made useful, the couples are quickly in motion, little ceremonies about introduction being dispensed with.

Sometimes a really good singer delights his audience. There was such a one at the Mont Cervin hotel last year, a man who had a splendid tenor voice. There was also a young man who sang comic songs, and a young lady, without a voice, who would insist on favouring the company.

Incongruity of dress is a strange feature of mountain travelling. The women who mean business wear short serge costumes, felt hats, and flat shoes, whilst an alpenstock seems to be so much a part of them, that one can hardly imagine them laying it aside even when they go to bed. Lace dresses and dainty toilettes suitable for Rotten Row are not uncommon. Some women evidently like to travel prepared for every emergency, and are always followed about by a huge trunk, with probably a ball-dress in it.

There is a little church at Zermatt, where a chaplain during the tourist season holds the Sunday services. It stands on the slope of a hill, in a churchyard where a few tombstones are erected

to the strangers who have perished among the mountains. The Catholic burying-ground is a very interesting spot to visit, having within its precincts the remains of Mr. Hudson, Mr. Hadow, and the well-known guide, Michel Croz.

In the year 1865, the first ascent of the Matterhorn was accomplished. Eight men started from Zermatt on the 13th of July, at half-past six in the morning, Lord Francis Douglas, Mr. Hadow, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Whymper, Michel Croz the guide, also Peter Taugwalder, another guide, and his two sons, one of whom returned to Zermatt on the following day, his services not being required.

The ascent of the Matterhorn was achieved with safety, but in descending, the rope that bound the little party together broke, and Hadow, Hudson, Lord Francis Douglas, together with the guide Michel Croz, fell from precipice to precipice on to the Matterhorn glacier, a distance of nearly 4,000 feet, and were killed on the spot.

Down in Zermatt a report was brought to the Hotel Mont Rosa that an avalanche had fallen. It was the flying bodies of the unfortunate men who perished.

The remains of Mr. Hudson, Mr. Hadow, and Michael Croz were discovered, and finally, by order of the Government, brought down to Zermatt, twenty men being especially employed for the purpose. The body of Lord Francis Douglas was never found. Maybe it is still preserved wrapped in a mantle of snow and ice, and truly has it been written of him, that no man ever before had such a tombstone as his,—a monument a mile high, standing on a gigantic pedestal.

Mr. Whymper, Peter Taugwalder, and his son, the three whose lives were saved, came down from the Matterhorn to Zermatt on the day following the accident, and at the time, Mr. Whymper wrote an account of the tragedy in the visitors' book at the Mont Rosa hotel. That interesting leaf was afterwards torn out and carried away, by the ruthless hand of some unprincipled tourist. Since then, the book with another brief account has always been kept by Mr. Seiler, under lock and key; but that the original should have been stolen is much to be deplored.

A granite obelisk has been erected to the memory of Michel Croz. Three other monuments lie side by side on the north side of the Catholic church, one has Mr. Hadow's name on it, another Mr. Hudson's, and the third is sacred to the memory of a Mr. Grote, a Russian traveller, who lost his life in 1859, by falling into a crevasse of the Findelen glacier.

Lord Francis Douglas and Mr. Hadow were only nineteen years of age.

Tiny mounds of earth, the length of a child's coffin, are allotted to the poor in the Catholic churchyard at Zermatt; most of these have a cross in marigolds planted down the centre,

and at the head is placed a stained black wooden cross, a name, or often only initials, being rudely scratched upon it, apparently with a nail or knife. In Switzerland the time allowed for a body to remain peacefully interred is short. They do not bury their dead one on the top of the other, but at every funeral some body has to be removed to make room for a new occupant. The bones are put into a charnel-house, or cellar, and the skulls ranged round the walls of a small chapel. Sometimes, when the skeletons are taken out of the ground, the flesh has scarcely fallen from the bones. Once at Andermatt I saw a body being thrown out by the grave-digger, and the thigh and knee-bones were still adhering.

A good many men living in mountain regions meet their death through falls, but no such tragedy has ever been recorded as the death of those four out of the seven adventurous Alpine climbers who achieved the first ascent of the Matterhorn. Up to the year 1865, the Matterhorn had not only been looked upon as inaccessible, but as being a haunted mountain, and possibly the abode of the spirits of the dead. The poor in most of the mountain villages are very ignorant, and, as a natural consequence, immensely superstitious. If the sacrifice of the explorers' lives did nothing more, it certainly broke a spell which can never exist again.

Many ascents of the Matterhorn have been made since that first fatal experience, and the mountain is no longer considered inaccessible. Dangerous points of rock have been blasted, and in some parts chains are put, though many of these have been swept away by thunderstorms.

More people, especially the young and strong, would doubtless ascend mountains than now do so, were they not deterred—not by the danger—but by the expense. A rich man can afford to climb Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn, but a poor man naturally hesitates before spending fifteen or twenty pounds to get a better view from looking down a mountain than he does by looking up.

Last year, during the ten days I spent at Zermatt, no fewer than four serious accidents happened. Mr. Seiler improvised a stretcher out of a folding iron bedstead, and laid a mattress on it, which was covered by a thick rug. That stretcher seemed to be constantly in requisition. Two young men crossing the Gorner glacier were the first to need it, one of them having his ankle badly crushed. A lady staying at the Mont Rosa hotel fell off her mule, and for some days her life hung in the balance, as erysipelas in the head intervened. Another lady, staying at the Mont Cervin hotel, lost her maid, who had been desired by her mistress, with whom she had been walking, to go straight back to Zermatt by the path leading from the Riffel. She strayed from it to gather wild flowers, fell over a precipice, and remained undiscovered for four hours, lying in great agony with a broken hip

and a fractured skull. She was brought down to the hotel on the stretcher, and, after being kept there a week, was put into a plaster jacket and carried all the way down to Visp. At Visp she was put into an invalid carriage and conveyed by rail to the hospital at Lausanne.

The last accident was fatal. A Mr. D——s and his friend were walking up the Riffel, when Mr. D——s turned aside to climb a rock. It presented no great difficulties, and there was no apparent danger; but either a piece of the rock gave way, or his foot slipped, for he fell and was hideously crushed to death.

The dangers of Alpine climbing are hardly sufficiently understood, and can certainly *never* be over-estimated. The foolhardy will always hold their lives in their hands, if they attempt to wander without a guide among the high mountains of Switzerland.

C. M. HAWKSFORD.

SONNET.

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.

As that fair princess in the old romance
Who lay in changeless calm of charmed sleep
Was thrilled to joyous life and passion deep
By one warm kiss which woke her from her trance,
She blushing purely 'neath the prince's glance,
Whose love-lit eyes her own enthralled keep
Till to their depths must answering rapture leap,
And tender glowing smiles her charms enhance;
Even so to-day, when first the spell-bound earth,
The conquering sun did greet, her pulses stirred.
Within, the folded grasses strove for birth,
While subtle fragrance rose and song of bird—
And in the heart of man a holy sense
Of purer hope, delight, and innocence!

I. J. LEMON.

THE IRISH HARP.

"The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled."

MOORE.

A VISIT, while in Dublin, to St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity College suggested this sketch. In the one is a marble slab erected by Lady Morgan to the memory of Carolan, the Irish harper; in the other a beautiful specimen of an old Irish harp is preserved. The intervening years between that harper's death and the pretended origin of that harp form the Augustan era of Irish minstrelsy. Prior to that epoch the history of the Irish harp is "lost in the twilight of fable;" subsequent to it, it gradually becomes extinct.

The earliest reference I could find to the harp in Ireland is a description of the Teach Mid Chuarta, or Hall of Tara, written, according to Petrie, probably in the sixth century, and alluding to a custom of the third by which places were set apart in the hall for the Cruitire, or harpers. The author of a poem in A.D. 594, on the death of Colomba, mentions the harp as accompanying his song; and later still a harp was found represented on an old sculptured cross in Ullard church, Co. Kilkenny, which from its style and worn condition is apparently anterior to A.D. 830, the date assigned to the famous cross of Monasterboyce. It is observable that there are only seven strings in the Ullard harp, and that it has no fore-pillar "the first specimen," says Fergusson (in Bunting's "Irish Music") "of the harp without a fore-pillar that has hitherto been discovered out of Egypt;" adding that this circumstance justifies "the startling presumption that the Irish have had the harp originally out of Egypt." The inference is noteworthy though not absolutely conclusive. Indeed, an equally cogent argument might be deduced in favour of its Thracian origin, from the fact that a quadrangular harp with two strings appears on an ornamental cover or "theca" of an Irish MS. of the eleventh century in the Duke of Buckingham's library (in 1840) at Stowe, and a similar one having since been traced on a monument at Petan, in Styria. The monument was erected during the reign of the Emperor Aurelius, and Orpheus is shown on it performing on an instrument bearing a great resemblance

to that on the Irish "theca." There can be no two opinions about the antiquity of the Irish harp, but those regarding its origin are necessarily hazy. A writer of the reign of Henry II. informs us that the Irish harpers taught their beloved art in secret, but this evidently did not prevent the accomplished Cambrensis, who followed in that monarch's train, from sharing in and appreciating its excellences. That he was surprised and delighted at what he heard is clear from the following brief excerpt from his Itinerary :

"In musicis instrumentis, commendabilem invenio istius gentis diligentiam; in quibus, præ omni natione quam vidimus, incomparabiliter est instructa. Non enim in his, sicut in Britannicis (quibus assueti sumus) instrumentis, tarda et morosa est modulatio; verum velox et præceps, suavis tamen et jucunda sonoritas."

There is some evidence (Walker's "Irish Bards") of the existence, in 1340, of a school of harpers under the direction of a renowned harper named O'Carrol; and a decade later a harp was rudely but accurately engraved on the beautiful "Fiachal Phodring," or reliquary, in which St. Patrick's tooth is said to have been preserved. Petrie says thirty strings are visible in the engraving, which fact would go far to prove that that number was in use in Ireland before 1350. The same author also assigns to this period the origin of the harp referred to above, commonly but erroneously known as Brian Boru's harp, and preserved in the museum of Trinity College, Dublin. Petrie's able and scholarly refutation of O'Gorman's theory lays for ever at rest all doubts as to the origin of this venerable relic. "The harp," he writes, "popularly known as the harp of Brian Boru, is not only the most ancient instrument of the kind known to exist in Ireland, but is, in all probability, the oldest harp now remaining in Europe. Still, however, it is very far from being of the remote age to which it is popularly supposed to belong; and the legendary story on which this supposition is grounded, and which has been fabricated to raise its antiquity and increase its historical interest, is but a clumsy forgery, which will not bear for a moment the test of critical antiquarian examination." Applying this "test" himself, Petrie discovered that the arms on it are not those of the O'Brien, but of the O'Neill sept, that from its size (32 inches) and other signs it was evidently a Ceirnin, or religious harp, and that it belonged in all likelihood to one of two O'Neills in the fourteenth century, bishops respectively of Clogher and Derry. This remarkable harp is of exquisite workmanship. The upright pillar is of oak, the sounding-board of yellow sawn, the extremity of the forearm is capped with silver, and the thirty string-holes (not twenty-eight, as Vallancy inaccurately asserts) are neatly ornamented with carved brass. The four sounding-holes were once (as is supposed) adorned with silver, removed presumably by the fingers of time, or a thief; the foot-piece, or rest, has also

disappeared, and the parts of the harp to which it was joined show considerable signs of decay. Walker gives a capital delineation of this national treasure in his work (*ubi supra*), and states that it was presented by his friend Mr. Ousley, of Limerick, to the Right Hon. W. Conyngham, "who, in the year 1782, generously deposited it in the museum of Trinity College, Dublin." It is a curious fact that twenty-two years previously it was played on in the streets of the "City of the Violated Treaty" by one of the family for whom it was originally made—the famous harper, Arthur O'Neill. Irish patriots may often echo Lover's pathetic words:

"Oh! give me one strain
Of that wild harp again,
In melody proudly its own;
Sweet harp of the days that are gone,"

but no bard has since wakened its slumbering music.

The Irish possessed four kinds of harps: the *Clarsech*, or common harp; the *Ceirnin*, or small religious harp; the *Ciunard Cruit*, or high-headed harp; and the *Crom Cruit*, or down-bending harp. The first was that used by the bards and harpers, and is the Irish harp properly so called; the second, more exclusively clerical, probably accompanied Druidical as later Christian hymns. "Perhaps," says Walker (*ut supra*), "this instrument was sacred to *Karneios*, or *Apollo* (whence *Granneus*, an Irish name for our favourite Deity), and borne by the dancers at the *Kearnaire*, or sacrifice to that Diety. (Vallancey, 'Collect. de rebus Hib.'). In Arabic, *Keren* implies the rays of the sun, with which the poet tells us *Apollo's* lute was always strung." The *Ciunard Cruit* and *Crom Cruit*, though styled harps, were more strictly of the violin and guitar types; indeed, they may be considered the parents of those instruments. The former had ten strings and was played on with a plectrum, or bow; the latter possessed six strings two of which were touched with the thumb. Bunting (*loc. cit.*) adds two other harps to the four given by Walker and commonly referred to: the *Craiftin's Cruit*, a name derived from an Irish legendary hero, and the *Lub*, a poetical name of the harp. Mr. William Beauford, in a letter to Mr. Walker (April, 1786), gives an erroneous division of the Irish harps arising from a misconception of a passage of Brompton's, for which Moore (Preface to "Irish Melodies") thus takes him up sharply: "A singular oversight occurs in an essay on the Irish harp by Mr. Beauford, which is inserted in the appendix to Walker's 'Historical Memoirs.' 'The Irish,' says he, 'according to Brompton, in the reign of Henry II., had two kinds of harps, "*Hibernici tamen in duobus musici generis instrumentis, quamvis præcipitem et velocem, suavem tamen et jucundam,*" the one greatly bold and quick, the other soft and pleasing.' How a man of Mr. Beauford's learning could so mistake the meaning and mutilate the grammatical construction of this

extract is unaccountable. The following is the passage as I find it entire in Brompton, and it requires but little Latin to perceive the injustice which has been done to the words of the old chronicler: 'Et cum Scotia, hujus terræ filia, utatur lyrâ, tympano et choro, ac Wallia citharâ, tubis et chorâ Hibernici, tamen in duobus musici generis instrumentis, *quævis præcipitem et velocem, suavem tamen et jucundam, crispatis modulis et intricatis notulis, efficiunt harmoniam.*' ("Hist. Anglic. Scrip.") Beauford is right in saying, as he does farther on, that the "two kinds of harps" were the "small and large harp" (the Clarsech and Ceirnin), in general use amongst the Irish; but he is wrong in limiting the number to two, and in his rendering of Brompton's passage. With reference to the change in the form of the Irish harp the same writer remarks somewhat more accurately: "As the science of music advanced among the European nations, the harp changed its form. Its original figure was, most probably, like the harp of the Phrygians—a right-angled, plain triangle; but as this form was not capable of receiving, with convenience, a number of strings, it was found more proper to alter the right angle to an oblique one, and to give a curvature to the arm. The Irish bards in particular seem, from experience derived from practice, to have discovered the true musical figure of the harp, a form which will, on examination, be found to have been constructed on true harmonic principles.

In the fifteenth century Robert Nugent, a Jesuit, made some useful improvements in the Irish harp, closing both the open space between the trunk and arm, and right sound-hole, and adding another row of strings; by which arrangement the treble could be played with the right hand and the bass with the left, which was also a new departure, since Irish harpers, like their brethren of Wales, were accustomed to the opposite method. But those additions, ingenious though they undoubtedly were, found scant favour, the old form of the harp being preferred to that which such innovations gave it. The influence exercised by Irish harpers at home and abroad is worthy of a passing notice. Each Irish chieftain kept a bard or harper in his castle, whose extemporaneous effusions while his fingers swept the strings spurred his lord on to valorous deeds or filled him with a dread of retribution as the occasion required. This influence apparently excited the jealous attention of the Virgin Queen, for in 1563 she caused an Act of Parliament to be passed against the Irish bards and their entertainers. The incident is thus alluded to by Mr. Preston in his "Verses written in the Dargle, Co. Wicklow."

"Here in old heroic times
The minstrel wak'd his lofty rhymes;
He tuned the harp, he bade them flow,
Attemper'd to the streams below.
When England would a land enthral,

She doom'd the Muse's sons to fall,
Lest Virtue's hand should string the lyre,
And feel with song the patriot's fire."

Three years subsequent to Elizabeth's enactment the Rev. John Good, in his "Description of the Manners and Customs of the Wild Irish," wrote: "They love music mightily, and of all instruments are particularly taken with the harp, which being strung up with brass wire, and beaten with crooked nails, is very melodious;" one proof amongst many of the futility of the Act. The Irish harp was to die a natural not a violent death. "The great Irish families," says Walker, "in the last century" (the seventeenth) "entertained in their houses harpers, who were the depositaries of their best pieces of music." Long, however, before Ireland's national instrument hung "mute on Tara's walls" its fame reached other lands. In 1100 the Welsh had their musical canon regulated by Irish harpers; besides, there are not wanting grounds for supposing that Cambria owes the harp to Erin. Walker writes thus on the last point: "Caradoc (Wynne's 'History of Wales') affirms that the Welsh had their instrument from the Irish. This some writers will not admit, because the Welsh do not, like the Irish, string their harp with brass chords. But the Welsh harp has not always been strung with gut. It appears from the first 'Book of the Introduction of Knowledge,' published by Borde, a Welsh poet, A.D. 1542, that the Welsh harp at that period was strung with horse-hair.

"For my harp is made of a good mare's skyn,
The stryngs be of horse-heare, it maketh a good dyn."

Now it is very probable that the first innovation which the Welsh made in the stringing of the harp, on their receiving it from this country, was the substituting hair for wire. But Vallancey brings an argument in support of Caradoc's assertion that must bear down every rising doubt. 'The Irish Teadhloin, pronounced Tealoin or Telin, is certainly the etymon of the Welsh Teylin, a harp—a word I can find no derivation of in that language; and I think proves from whence they borrowed both the instrument and its name.' ("Collect de rebus Hib.")

As in Wales, so in Scotland and England, the Irish harp and harpers were renowned. Neither country ever cultivated the harp to any extent: they were content to hear its strains awakened by Irish fingers. Buchanan states that Ethodius, the twenty-fifth Scottish monarch, kept an Irish harper in his palace; Rory Dall O'Cahan passing into Scotland delighted the ears of her James and his court by his brilliant execution (this O'Cahan is mentioned by Scott in his "Legend of Montrose" as the teacher of Annot Lyle, and "the most famous harper of the Western Highlands"); Denis Hempson played before the Pretender in Edinburgh; and

Echlin O'Kane (alluded to by Boswell in his "Tour in the Hebrides"), after exhibiting his skill in Italy, France, and Spain, resided for years in Scotland prior to his death, and was well known chiefly about Blair-Athol and Dunkeld. In English, as in Scottish halls and leafy glens, have Irish bards discoursed sweet music to appreciative ears. "No harpe," wrote Bacon, "hath the sound so melting and so prolonged as the Irish harpe;" and the Duke of Newcastle frequented with other notabilities (*circa* 1730) the house of a certain Maguire near Charing Cross, London, attracted by his skilful manipulation of the harp. Beneath the blue skies of Italy, too, the Irish harp found a welcome and a home more than once. Galilei, a Tuscan author of the sixteenth century, alluding to it, wrote: "This most ancient instrument was brought to us from Ireland, as Dante says (born 1265), where they are excellently made and in great numbers, the inhabitants of that island having practised on it for many ages." The same could doubtless be said by half a dozen other European nations.

In 1738 the death-throes of the Irish harp began, for in the March of that year Turlough O'Carolan expired, whose genius had revived its ancient glories for half a century. Others followed him who shed a bright lustre upon it, but it was the after-glow of the sun that had set.

"The last of all the bards was he."

Undisputed prince of Irish harpers, Carolan, unlike many, obtained a niche in the temple of fame, while his harp and his songs were entrancing his people. Posterity has ratified the verdict. Two only of his successors have approached him within anything like measurable distance—Denis Hempson and Arthur O'Neill. The latter achieved much fame, but was acknowledged to be inferior to the former in execution. Hempson attained the great age of one hundred and twelve years; his harp is preserved in a baronet's family at Downhill. Vigorous efforts were made at the close of the last century and beginning of this, to rekindle the expiring flame of national interest in the harp, but with little success. In the *Dublin Evening Post* of July, 1784, the following advertisement appeared, which was also reinserted in July, 1785:

IRISH HARP.

To encourage the national music of Ireland, the following prizes will be given at Granard, on Monday, the 1st of August next, to performers on the Irish harp, under the decision of judges to be appointed by the company then present.

Seven guineas	to the best performer.
Five "	to the second.
Three "	to the third.
Two "	to the fourth.

A meeting was subsequently held, of which Walker says: "The contest was held at the appointed time. The company was large

and brilliant ; but the performers were only *mediocres*, and the music common and ill-selected." Bunting gives an account of a similar contest, but with better results, which was held in the Exchange, Belfast, in 1792. Hempson and O'Neill were present with eight others. O'Neill carried off the first prize of ten guineas, and Ch. Fanning the second of eight guineas. Six guineas were awarded to the rest of the performers. Hempson was evidently out of form through age, being then in his ninety-seventh year. An interesting incident occurred at the close of the contest, which Bunting narrates thus : "The Irish harpers were succeeded by a Welshman (Williams), whose execution was very great ; the contrast between the sweet, expressive tones of the Irish instrument, and the bold, martial ones of the Welsh, had a pleasing effect as marking the difference of character between the two nations." It seems that the harps used by the foregoing representatives of the old race of Irish harpers were strung with thirty strings, and had a compass from C to D in alt., "comprising," as Fergusson remarks, "the tones included between the highest pitch of the female voice and the lowest of the male." An Irish harp society was formed in 1807, which came to a premature end six years later ; a similar fate befell another in Dublin about the same period.

The Irish harp is now a thing of the past.

"Hush'd is the harp—the minstrel gone."

Both lie silent in a humble grave at Killronan, where Carolan sleeps, but the memory of their glories will always be fresh in the hearts of the Irish people.

J. B. S.

"BROKE."

By KNOBKERRY.

A TALE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN RACECOURSE.

CHAPTER I.

IN NATAL.

IT is a winter evening in August, year 1880. (This, reader, may seem peculiar, but it is a fact, for the scene of my tale is South Africa.)

The sun is fast sinking for the night, behind a range of hills, not far from Durban, the chief port of Natal.

A solitary horseman is seen wending his way along the narrow mountain path, leading to the camp of the cavalry regiment stationed at a small country village, about fourteen miles from the aforesaid town.

The rider's name is Douglas, who has just come out from the depôt to join his regiment on service. Douglas is a man of good family but scanty means; in fact, besides his pay he has but a very limited income to call his own, and is in that enviable position, which I hope may not be the reader's, a cavalry subaltern on his last legs.

Two years at home have exhausted the small amount of capital he commenced his career with, and now he finds himself landed in a foreign clime, practically an outcast, for he dare not return to England.

Tailors, bootmakers, saddlers, &c., and that noted firm of Kite Flyers, Spiretti, and Co. are lying in ambush for his body the moment he sets foot on the shores of his native land, and but yesterday a telegram arrived for the 22nd Hussars to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to Portsmouth *en route* to Sheffield.

But to return to our rider, who is smoking furiously, and gazing in front of him with an expression in his eyes which shows that his body may be present yet his thoughts far away.

He occasionally takes the Trichinopoly from his lips to shout (we will not say swear) at his trekker, who periodically seems to be in a humour to say his prayers, possibly in imitation of various Trappists from the monastery hard by, who are scattered about in

various attitudes of devotion, some in the centre of the sweet potato crops and others in the mealie fields.

But our hero heeds them not, for he is thinking of the county meeting to take place in the following week, and whether in one lucky coup he could clear off his debts and leave a small margin to start afresh.

Stewart, a captain in the regiment, is running a horse for the Natal stakes, distance two miles over hurdles, but the knotty point at present to be solved is whether Yellow Fog is a good thing; he is a Natal horse, and the supposed cracks have only just arrived from the Cape, and as yet have not had time to get over a tolerably rough passage in one of the small coasting steamers that ply between Capetown and Durban.

A violet glow steals over the hills, showing that darkness will soon take the place of daylight, for there is but little twilight out here, and with a new moon it is not pleasant riding amongst ant heaps and those bottomless pits caused by that voracious animal the ant bear.

Douglas puts his horse at a canter, soon passes the station, and keeps on at a smart pace up the dusty track that does duty as a road.

He soon arrives at the mess compound, gives over his horse to his servant, and strolls into the verandah, where five or six brother-officers are lounging about in various attitudes and attire, grumbling at the country and the people, and asking for the twentieth time or so how the time is to be passed till mess, a question hard to answer, for knocking the balls about on an indifferent table is neither edifying nor amusing.

Imbibing milk punch is at last resorted to as a break to the monotony, and then they gradually disperse, some to smoke and others to write English letters for the outgoing mail on the following day.

Douglas goes to his room, opens his despatch-box and takes out a packet, unmistakably bills, and notes the totals on a sheet of paper.

"To account rendered" seems the favourite item, and as he slowly adds to the pile of figures, already reaching to a very fair amount, his patience gives way, and gathering the offending documents up in a heap he thrusts them back into the writing-case, throws himself on his camp bed, lights his pipe, and bemoans his fate.

"What an unlucky devil I am!—always in debt! I see nothing for it now but an infantry regiment and India. I must write to Jull to-morrow. But fellows are not so keen to exchange nowadays. There is that beastly transferring, and I do not suppose I would get more than four hundred in any case. No! I'll wait till the races are over, and see what luck I have there. A trump card may turn up, and there is no good doing anything I might

be sorry for afterwards. Let me see! This is Monday, and this day week is the eventful day."

The puffs of smoke curl gently upwards, and Douglas begins indulging in that pleasant but unstable occupation, building "castles in the air."

Have you ever tried it, reader?

As you go on building everything assumes a rosy hue, and at last one believes one's thoughts to be true. Vain mirage!

But there goes the dress trumpet!

A knock at the door is followed by a hussar with a pair of mess overalls and varnished boots in one hand, the inevitable order book in the other.

"Give me the orders, Smith. Thanks! Let me see, what's on to-morrow? Parade for cast horses at ten—Ah! Brown fined five shillings—silly young ape! Marsh granted ten days' leave—lucky sinner! Reid, orderly officer! Here you are, Smith! you need not wait; call me at the usual time."

The door closes, and Douglas proceeds to divest himself of his mufti and don his mess kit, lathering his chin at the glass.

"The deuce! I have cut myself! Shall never stop the bleeding in time! Late last night! A magnum if I am late again" (for with the chief being late for mess was considered tantamount to being late on parade). "Hi! Smith, run and ask Mr. Reid to lend me some of his pink court plaster; tell him I have mown half my face off. It is those beastly candles! I won't have any more of them, they give no light at all. You can get better ones I'm sure, if you try."

The plaster is procured, and the mess trumpet rings out just as Douglas buttons his waistcoat.

"Waiter! Bring me a sherry and bitters."

"What is the matter with you to-night, old snake? Why this excess? It is seldom you imbibe before dinner." The speaker is Tate, one of the senior captains.

"Why, that ride this afternoon gave me an awful thirst."

"Well, let us sit down, the chief has crossed out I see—in society I suppose."

They are soon seated, and then the hubbub of the mess table begins; harmless chaff flying about like shuttlecocks from a battledore.

"Where was Leslie going this afternoon? He was after petticoats, I know. How is she, old man? Must go and call on that pretty Kaffir next Sunday. Where are they?"

"I'll bet you two to one in fivers Yellow Fog falls."

"Hulloa! A magnum for Arbuthnot, the cloth is not off the table."

"We shall be able to buy the coach, and horse it too, if we go on at this rate."

So dinner proceeds, and at last the coffee and cigars are brought round.

"What shall we do now?"

"Let's have a cock fight! We can get that crowing devil in from the cook; about time he was out of mess."

"Won't do; let's have a wrestle."

This is agreed to, the tables being shoved on one side.

"Let Tate wrestle Reid."

"Bet you a drink Reid puts him down."

"Done with you!"

The two opponents take off their jackets, and spurs, and the fun commences.

"Wait for the grip!"

"He has it! No he hasn't! Ah! Put him on his back."

"Look at Tate's overalls!"

"There goes Reid's waistcoat up the seams."

"Ah! Tate's down."

"Where has Leslie gone?"

"Let's go and draw him!"

"No! The youngster is seedy—got a touch of fever, I think."

What babies! some will say. But, my friends, possibly you have never been tied down to a place where you are even glad to amuse yourself by prodding at flies with a fork, or some such equally exhilarating pastime.

Surely even this is better than the old, old days, when it was considered a gentlemanly and correct thing to turn oneself into a wine cellar, and men were tested by the number of bottles they could consume.

Intoxication has gone out of fashion in the service, and in the present day an inebriate would soon get a polite hint to quit.

Our friends soon disperse, and seek refuge in the arms of Morpheus.

CHAPTER II.

NEWS FROM HOME.

"COME in! What is it?"

"English mail in, sir; four letters for you."

"Thanks! What sort of morning is it?"

"Cold, sir."

"Ah, well, get me a hot tub, then."

"Let's have a look at these letters. Ah, Cobb! Can't wait any longer for that forty pounds. Will have to take legal proceedings. That is encouraging. Who is this from? Baxter thinks his last letter must have miscarried, calling attention to his small account for nine pounds ten.

"The scoundrel! Why, it is only six months since I paid him.

Ah, well! He can wait. What is this? A photo, by Jove! Bother the women! How did she know I was out here? Looks prettier than ever, though. Ah, Spiretti! The bill for two hundred is overdue, sorry he can't renew. A pretty kettle of fish! Where is it all to end? Many a man has cut his throat for less. But I must get up. Let me see, I have leave from stables, shall lunch at the club, and then go and see Yellow Fog do his hurdles. Smith! Tell Thomas to have the pony here at ten, I shall want him to go down to the station. I mean to catch the ten fifteen from the hill."

"Very good, sir. Do you want your bag?"

"No, I shall be back by the six-thirty; either you or Thomas can bring the pony down to meet it. What time is it now?"

"Half-past nine, sir."

"Well, tell Raikes to get me some fish, I will be down directly."

"Tea or coffee, sir?"

"Why do you bother? You know I always drink tea. I want some silver, and fill my cigar case—those new Trichis; not the cigars."

"Very good, sir."

Having settled his hunting tie to his liking, our hero strolls downstairs to the mess-room, which is only occupied by the orderly officer, for most of them are late birds, seldom showing up till after ten.

"Good morning, Reid."

"Good morning, Douglas! Where are you off to in that mashing kit?"

"Why! I have something to do in town; besides I want to see Stewart's horse."

"What, Yellow Fog? He will be nowhere—don't believe he can stay; besides that, hear he has an enlarged hock."

"Well, seeing is believing. He fancies the horse himself, and generally he is not far out."

"No! But, my dear fellow, the excitement of this lively place has turned his head—must have! He believes he has a good thing in that pony of his. Have you seen him?"

"No. What is he like?"

"A grey rat of a thing, ribs you could hang your hat on. Has entered him, too, for that flat race."

"What is the distance? Do you know?"

"Mile and a half, I believe."

"What does he call him?"

"Vesuvian! He is just over height. Rather a pity; for, joking apart, I think he might do something amongst ponies; has good clean legs, and seems to have a turn of speed, but I believe his bolt is shot at a mile."

"Oh, well, I must be off. Do anything for you?"

"No, thanks, old man. Ta ta."

Douglas canters off, for the mess clock does not always agree with the station time, and just as he reaches the hill the train steams in.

"Here is your ticket, sir!"

"Thanks!"

The train moves off—bang—rattle—one minute up, the next down, for the line seems to have been laid to take in every rise and fall that can be found, and must have proved a fortune to the contractor, if not to the company; now winding like a snake, now shooting round a corner with a rapidity that almost takes the breath away.

Our hero is seated in one corner, carrying on a mild flirtation, by means of his eyes, with a rather pretty girl seated opposite to him, whose mamma is studying the local paper quite unconscious of this by-play.

They both alight at the next station, making way for a crusty-looking old colonist, in a Terai hat, with green puggaree, who scowls at our friend as much as to say, "What the deuce are you doing here?"

By this time the sun is blazing away in full swing.

Numerous fires are visible, dotted about the veldt, the colonial way of getting rid of the tall grass; the young shoots soon forcing their way through the soil where this is done.

Here and there Kaffir kraals appear on the crests of the hills, and herds of oxen grazing in the valley, making rather a pretty picture.

Occasionally you pass gangs of coolies at work on the coffee and sugar plantations.

As you dart by the sprints you hear the frogs croaking, showing that rain is not far distant, and the crickets' chirp in the clefts of the rocks.

The crusty gentleman puts a handkerchief over his face, beginning to snore, Douglas falling into a reverie, till the scream of the engine announces another station, which turns out to be the terminus.

How different to an English terminus. Here are no hansoms plying for hire, nor busses rattling over the noisy stones, but a train drawn by a span of bony oxen, or a mule-team driven by a Kaffir with wondrous dexterity, a henchman standing behind the driver with a long bamboo whip, the crack of which sounds like a pistol, and wielded with a precision which would call forth the admiration of Ward, or the Four-in-hand Club.

Douglas turns into the barber's to have his hair cut, a proceeding which always takes place on coming to town, and then saunters into lunch.

"Let me see, what is the time? Half-past three. Well, I can be at the course by four," and taking up his stick and hat, he strolls up the dusty track leading from the club to the station,

about a mile distant, where he finds Stewart already mounted on Yellow Fog, the hock, as Reid had predicted, being puffed.

"Hulloa, Douglas! What brings you here? Come to see me have a spin! Eh? I am going to take him over the hurdles; for the Turf Club make no rule about it; rather different to England. What are you looking at? His hock? That will not stop him. The only thing I am frightened of is he will come down with me. Takes off such an awful distance from his fences. Frightfully jumpy work riding him, I can tell you. Newbolt is going to give Vesuvian a gallop by himself afterwards. I cannot wait. I think he is a certainty, for he is very fast at a mile, I know, and am nearly sure can stay the extra distance, although the man I bought him from never knew it, and thought him a mile horse only. You put your money on him, you can back him cheap."

"Well, but what about Yellow Fog?"

"My dear boy! Take my advice; back Vesuvian. I am not sure of the other, although I have a little money on him; but I must be moving. It's getting late, shall see you to-morrow."

"As Stewart says, he is an awkward fencer. Would not ride him for a fortune. Some of these days he will jump short and break his jockey's neck. He is certainly not a safe investment in any sense of the word. By Jove! he made his mark on that last hurdle. Rattled all four. Ah! he's pecked. Well saved, old man! Now to see the pony."

Vesuvian is led out, and Newbolt soon chucked into the saddle.

He is not a bad-looking little horse, although weedy, and regular work and good feeding are already beginning to tell upon him; his ribs not being so much like hat-rails since Stewart took him in hand.

"The next few days will make all the difference in him, sir; he is now two stone better than he was; they are letting him in light, too."

"What! Are the weights out, then?"

"Yes, sir. He is in at seven one, and that hill, just before you come to the bend, seems to suit him."

The grey starts, showing undeniable pace, returning to the stand, not a hair being turned.

"Do you know where the little horse came from, Newbolt?"

"From Matthews, at Kimberley, sir. He raced him last year up country, but sold him on account of bad feet. He shows no signs of unsoundness now, and it is soft going here, it is."

"Well! good night, Newbolt, I must catch my train."

"Good night, sir."

"I wonder if the bloke saw he was never extended? This horse will be nuts to the bookies; the favourite will be nowhere. He comes up that hill and round into the straight like an express train. If he leads there he is a moral; and I ain't got no fear

about their trying to get at him, for he's a rank outsider. Come on, my cherub!"

The jockey takes his horse to his stable, Douglas just catching his train.

CHAPTER III.

THE COURSE.

THE next few days pass, and it is the race morning, the 22nd Hussars, in force, are waiting on the club steps for their conveyance to take them to the course.

"Here comes our drag!"

"Would look well at Ascot. Be rather a swagger team, I think."

The team spoken of consists of ten mules and an ambulance, which turns the corner in great style, and pulls up opposite the door.

"Think we ought to send this to the *Graphic*!"

"Yes, you draw it."

"What shall we call it?"

"A Regimental Drag in South Africa!"

They all get in, and away they go rattling over the stones, the driver shouting, his henchman laying into the unfortunate mules with his long raw hide.

"Hi, you Johnny!"

"That was a narrow squeak!"

"Wonder what they would charge for running over a Kaffir?"

"Oh, I say! Shan't have a tooth left in my head!"

"Sit tight!"

Bang! Rattle! Bump! And the ambulance clears a regular double like a chaser.

"Should have a race for this sort of concern across country!"

"Here we are at the gate; can't go in with this; must get down."

They all alight, our hero going off with Reid.

"Grand stand, sir?"

"Yes, and paddock."

"Can't get paddock tickets here, sir! Must pay up above."

"All right! How much for this?"

"Five bob!"

"Here's half a sov. Reid, you can get the paddock tickets."

The two friends stroll up the course towards the stand.

A South African course is not like Epsom during a race meeting, my friends.

Here are no Aunt Sallys, no cocoa nuts, nor our friends in the gaily-striped unmentionables, with bones and tambourines.

We do not hear the soft strains of

"Dear old Brown turned upside-down,
"And his legs sticking up in the air, oh my!"

or similar drawing-room melodies.

We do not see our friends sticking knives through their ears, trying to inveigle us into buying purses for half a crown, into which they have just placed half a sovereign and some loose silver.

"Saw me put it in, sir."

"No, they are not here."

But the crowd is well conducted, and I must say there is a wonderful absence of bad language, nothing to shock the most sensitive ears.

"C'rect card, sir! Only sixpence."

"Yes, give me one. First race at twelve. Come on, Reid, the saddling bell is just ringing. Ah! the hurdle race just after the luncheon interval."

"What race is this?"

"Six furlongs."

"Who are running?"

"Blue Peter, Assegai, Petrach, Whisker, and Bluff. No name scratched."

"The bookmakers are hard at it. Six to four Blue Peter; five to one Assegai."

"I'm betting on the hurdle race!"

"Two to one bar one! Two to one the field!"

"Roll up, gentlemen! Roll up! I give the best prices in the colony."

But Douglas does not heed them, for he is waiting to plump on the last race.

He and Reid go into the paddock to watch the saddling.

"Are you going to do anything, Reid?"

"No, I am not a betting man."

The race is run off, Assegai winning in a canter, the bookies get hilarious, and shout themselves hoarse.

"Shall we have some lunch?"

"Yes, may as well. There is the club tent; come and sample the Monopole."

Luncheon passes; the hurdle race takes place, Yellow Fog falling as predicted, Stewart escaping with a barked nose and a mouthful of mud.

Race after race follows, and now is the great event of the day.

The bookies are at it again.

The eighty-one-tonner, as he calls himself, sits under a huge umbrella, on a raised platform, a slate with the odds scored on it by his side.

The well-known cries are again heard. "Six to four Pride of Erin; a pony to five pounds Maid of Athens; two to one the President; ten to one Vesuvian."

"Going to have a dart, Douglas?"

"Yes! But I think Vesuvian will go lower yet. Come on to the paddock."

Pride of Erin, the favourite, is a tall, powerful-looking horse, and is the centre of attraction, and Douglas, as he looks at his glossy coat and thoroughly fit condition, feels his heart sink, for there is no gainsaying it, he looks far more like a winner than the Vesuvian pony, who even now looks somewhat ragged, and calls for no attention.

"What do you say, Reid?"

"Shall express no opinion; Pride of Erin looks all there, though; but back your own fancy, old boy!"

"Well, I can't help it; here goes a man or a mouse on Vesuvian."

Reid (*sotto voce*), "Wish you well out of it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RACE.

STEWART is in the paddock saddling Vesuvian himself, looking rather comical, with a strip of court plaster across his nose, and whispers over his shoulders to Douglas:

"Never mind the pony's look, I have some money on him. You should have seen the eighty-one tonner's look of delight as he booked me."

The jockeys mount and go out for the preliminary canter.

Reid moves off towards the stand, but Douglas catches him by the arm.

"May I ask you a favour, old man?"

"Yes, twenty if you like; what is it?"

"You are going to use your glasses, are you not?"

"Yes! What on earth is your little game?"

"Well, I am going to stop in the ring, and I want you, if Vesuvian should happen to be leading, rounding the bend, to lower them for a second."

"Certainly. All right; I will."

By this time the canter is over, and the horses are walking slowly round the course towards the mile-and-half post.

The ring is quiet, for most of the bets are booked, and nearly all of the bookmakers have gone to the rails to watch the finish, as the judge's box is only a few yards away.

The eighty-one tonner is an exception, and remains seated, ready to turn a penny, even at the last moment.

There is a shout, "They're off!" and Douglas watches Reid carefully, who, according to promise, has raised his glasses.

It is an anxious moment; no one will rise to the bait of the eighty-one tonner, as he continues to shout, "Twelve to one, Vesuvian; fourteen to one, Vesuvian; fifteen to one, Vesuvian pony!"

The glasses drop. Douglas turns his head, saying quietly, "Take you, four ponies."

The eighty-one tonner books it like a shot, a smile passing over his face.

What a din, what shouting, as they thunder into the straight.

"Pride of Erin wins! No, he doesn't! Yes, he does! The favourite's beat! Pride of Erin's flogging!"

A moment of suspense, and a grey leading, flashes past the rails. Vesuvian, hard held, is a winner by a length. Pride of Erin second. Third horse nowhere.

The jockeys are weighed in, and up go the numbers, every-thing correct.

Then the bookmakers raise a shout, with the exception of the eighty-one tonner, who looks glum, answering the jeers of his comrades with the remark:

"Publish it in the *Mercury*, why don't you?"

They gather round in a circle singing variations of their own composing, to the tune of the "See Saw" waltz and "Razors in the Air."

Gradually the course clears. Cigars are lighted, the spectators wending homewards.

Our hero feels happy. He can now return to England with safety, and start afresh, for he is a winner of some fifteen hundred pounds.

The commencement of our tale was "BROKE," but I think, with me, you will be pleased at the close to call it "MENDED."

"HUSSAR."

GLIMPSES OF OUT-OF-WORK LONDON.

AS SEEN BY BIBLE-WOMEN AND NURSES.

“**WHAT?** More Out-of-Work! More Unemployed! Surely now May has come we may be allowed a slight respite from the cries of our London Lazarus! The fact is Lazarus is becoming rather a bore. Six months of him at a stretch is more than one can stand, you know! Besides, he ought to be in work again by this time.”

Such is the greeting I expect for this article; the expectation is not encouraging, yet I cannot blame the utterers of these sentiments, for on the very first tickling of the sun's light and heat I too feel it difficult to realize that there has been a winter at all, much less a winter from which thousands in whom I feel the deepest interest will never recover. A merciful Providence dulls the memory to past pain while it often leaves a thrill of delight long untouched by time.

A morning in the middle of March seems destined to remain to me bright and undimmed:

“'Mid many a day struck calm.”

It was the morning on which we awoke to find that the ground so long frost-bound and arid was again soft and moist, that the nip was out of the air, that the biting nor'-easter had given place to the soft south-west wind, that Hope and Spring were indeed once more in the offing. By the gratitude and delight with which I welcomed that morning I measure the length and misery of the past winter. It is as yet only about ten days since, but I fancy I shall remember the sensation as clearly ten years hence.

But the big pear tree I see from the window, as I write, is still black and bare, although the sun shines on the grass beneath it; it will be a mass of snowy blossom when you read this; by that time you will——But I must not allow myself to wander into orchards and May. Out-of-work London is still a grim fact; I have seen and heard plenty of it within the last three days. I hope much of it may have become “just-started-work London” long before hawthorn buds appear. “But,” as a good little Bible-woman, who has quite knocked herself up, said to me only yesterday, “People think, Oh, it's all right, as soon as they've started work again; but for ever so long they are almost as badly off as when

they were out of work. As soon as they take their first week's money, nearly all must go for back rent. Then there's money owing to the baker and the general shop, things in pawn to get out, and new boots that must be had. It will be pretty nearly all the summer before the most careful get straight, even if they keep in regular work. But many of them are in for a few weeks and then they're out again."

The amount of back rent owing all over the working-class neighbourhoods just now must be something enormous; and of this a large proportion is owing to small householders, who must punctually pay the landlord, although they themselves can get no rent from their lodgers.

The kindness and forbearance shown by these poor householders to their lodgers are truly wonderful. Only yesterday I saw a most respectable woman, a "landlady," or holder of a house, whose husband, a house painter, had been out of work all the winter, and who, with her large family of little children, had been brought down to absolute want; yet this good creature not only was going without the rent of a good-sized house full of lodgers, but was actually sharing such scanty meals as she had with a poor old widow in a top room, from whom it is highly improbable she will ever get a penny.

"My landlady" is a very important factor in these much-sublet houses. Most nobly, kindly, and generously has she come to the front during this sad winter; although of course there are exceptions, and human nature being what it is, Monday morning is sometimes a trying time.

But as a rule, "my landlady," who knows her lodgers' position as well as her own, does not fight against the inevitable; if she turned out the lodgers she has the next comers would be as poor, so she waits and takes her chance. As a rule, too, she is not disappointed—she is the first to be paid when her lodger "starts work again," and her—let us say—five shillings a week for three or four months is indeed a serious "pull-back."

The necessity of yielding to the inevitable is a lesson that even children learn—here is as sad an instance as you can well have.

Near the painter's wife I have just mentioned there lives another house-painter and his family. He too has been out of work all the winter. They have been without food for days together. One of our nurses found them out and took them some loaves. The poor little children looked at the bread with ravenous eyes, but they never spoke a word—they just stood by the table waiting quietly while their mother cut them slices.

"They are always like that," said the poor woman; "they never hang about me like some children would do; they never say, 'Mother, give us some bread!' they know I would give it them if I could." Yet those children had been so long without food that I dare not put down the time. Poor creatures! perhaps

they had given up all hopes of ever having anything to eat again! How sad and terrible the patience of childhood can become! Is there anything more pathetic than a patiently-starving child?

In these glimpses of Out-of-Work London I am purposely keeping away from the East End, partly because the East End has been so very much written about lately, and partly because the East End is so huge and powerful a magnet that if we were once within its influence it would be difficult to tear ourselves away from it. There is a certain romance about the East End. It is not wonderful that philanthropists have felt stirred to enthusiasm by it, too often to the neglect of other quarters.

On a fine summer day, two or three years ago, I stood on the roof of the White Tower and looked eastwards. It was a most impressive sight, those vast stretches of docks, and docks, and docks, stretching miles and miles down the river, far as eye could see and far beyond. When you know, too, that that great length is nearly equalled inland by a breadth of closely-packed dwellings, it is almost overwhelming. There is something so vast in the extent of the East End, there seems literally no end to the enormous hordes that fill every habitable nook and cranny from far beyond the once "fishful" but now malodorous Lea to the Tower, that one is altogether lost in wonder, perhaps even in despair.

No human mind can grasp the sum of human misery endured in the East End this winter, to much of which, alas! the spring will bring but little relief. Wide as the docks look when you see them spread out below as in a vast map, they have become ridiculously inadequate to accommodate the gigantic steamships of our Mercantile Marine. The trade of the Thame's Pool is rapidly going eastward to the river's mouth, the artisan and labourer follow slowly; and when they reach the work it is to find how much is being done, better and quicker than human hands can manage it, by steam or hydraulic machinery. The distress in the East End will not pass away on the first fine day. It is a subject demanding the brains and energies of the greatest thinkers and workers in England. We dare not hope things will be better there next winter; in all probability they will be worse.

Here is just one glimpse of out-of-work East End life. We should not be wrong in taking it as a type of hundreds.

"Our Stepney nurse has been attending Mrs. Sweetman and her new baby, but this morning we found the mother sitting up working hard at finishing off boys' knickerbocker suits. She has to make five button holes, sew on ten buttons, fell in the linings, soap and press the seams, finding her own thread and soap; for this she receives 1½d. a pair.

"By working hard at them from early morning until late at night she cannot possibly earn more than 1s. 3d., which is what is paid for a dozen pairs. But the husband is out of work and the

five children are hungry, so she is glad to work ever so hard to provide food, though she looks so sadly weary and in need of rest and of a good meal."

I might easily fill my space with details of East End misery, but as so many are trying to cope with it let us leave it for less known neighbourhoods and go up to Battersea in the south-west. The Battersea we will visit is not the river-side people's park, with its broad, fertile acres, its lake and pleasure boats, its sub-tropical garden, its Albert Palace, and so on, but an inland Battersea that has sprung up like a mushroom, or, some might say, like a toad-stool, within the last ten years, on fields that not long since were marshes.

I visited this Battersea last week just as the cold weather was breaking, and it seemed to me a modern and very dismal rendering of the Valley of the Shadow of Death—a land of consumption and bronchitis, of pleurisy and croup, where chest and throat diseases of all sorts were rampant, and where nearly every one was out of work.

Yet the roads were wide, the houses nearest the main thoroughfare boasted a couple of storeys and neatly-curtained windows; farther down were only one-storey dwellings of the regulation type, which doubtless had looked pretty enough when first built only a very few years ago. Now the cheap stucco is chipped, the cheap Venetians hanging loosely from their broken "ladders," the cheap ironwork of gates and rail rusting—a most melancholy, heart-breaking district, shrouded on that day in a deadly white mist, where those who were pretty well were absorbed in a desperate struggle to get a mouthful to eat, and those who were ill in fighting for breath.

Kind people were doing what they could by providing penny dinners for the children. Our nurse from this district is a kind motherly being, with a specially soft place in her heart for the little ones. I found her in a mission premises, redolent of pea-soup—the mid-day meal just over, the children sent off to school, but droppers-in of older growth coming with jugs for their share of what was left.

A sack of potatoes was reposing on the forms. In the evening Nurse and her helper would get them peeled for the morrow's dinner, for food is here the medicine most needed.

Armed with a great can of soup and a bag containing plenty of linseed meal, lint, clean linen, and many other needments, we, Nurse and I, went out into the district. First we took the soup to a widower and his four boys. The widower was at home out of work. He was a well-spoken, "very superior" looking middle-aged man. He had been a gentleman's servant the greater part of his life, he could do anything in a house, clean plate, paint, walls, anything. He and his boys were all in one room; certainly he kept it in as good order as was possible under the circumstances,

the bed was neatly made and the floor swept; but as for the poor boys they were ragged enough, and they would have been absolutely barefooted had not Nurse begged boots for them at our Mother House,* where we keep a store of such things. The father still managed to keep up a tolerably respectable appearance out of doors, for without it all chance of getting work would be lost. Few would have guessed the destitution of his home, unless they had carefully noted the expression of chronic anxiety in his face and eyes. He seemed very grateful for the trifle we gave him.

We left the widower and his boys, but hardly had I time to realize how sorry I was for them than I was in an upstairs room, where a poor woman, with a fearfully hard-racking cough was distressfully tossing about as if fighting for breath. A seven days' old baby was lying beside her, a mite of two had fallen asleep in the railed chair, from which it could not escape—there was no one looking after any of them.

Nurse soon had the kettle boiling, and a fine linseed and mustard poultice on the dreadful chest, and in a few minutes the breathing grew easier and the distressful tossings ceased, and the patient could speak a few short sentences. Sadly, most sadly depressed she was, poor thing. The husband had had a stroke some time ago; he had recovered, but all he had to depend upon was canvassing for an insurance office. He too, like his neighbour, had to keep up a respectable appearance out of doors; but many a day he returned without having earned a penny. We put a shilling under the wife's pillow, and were afterwards glad we had done so, for we met the husband returning from his fruitless rounds just before we entered another small house in which there were four families, all out of work. We could hear Nurse's patient coughing long before we reached her room—an unmistakably consumptive cough this time, and the patient, a large-made elderly woman, grown gaunt with illness, sitting up in the bed upon which she could never lie. Husband was elderly too, a stonemason out of work, sitting by a dying fire in heavy, sullen misery, yet rousing himself when his wife asked him to do anything and trying to do his best. She called him "dear," which is unusual among the working classes, and struck me as denoting gentler training on the wife's part. The wife could only speak in gasps, but she liked to talk, and in fact managed to get through a good deal of personal narrative. The husband was very taciturn, he only said one sentence that I remember. Nurse asked him if he had applied for aid from the Mansion House Fund. He shook his head with decision.

"But you should! Why don't you?"

"I couldn't do it for a sovereign!" he exclaimed, raising his

* London Bible and Domestic Female Mission, 2, Adelphi Terrace Strand, W.C.

head for one moment and then at once turning to the fire that was then just on the point of expiring.

Another poultice was badly needed here. The fire refused to boil even the little drop of water necessary to make it. They borrowed three sticks of firewood from the people in the next room, and so managed the affair. The poor old body was so thankful when she felt the comforting heat! We gave her a shilling, and she sent off her boy at once for a quarter of a hundred of coals and a bundle of wood. I hope that stonemason whom his wife addressed as "dear" will have found work long before you read this; but he is getting on in years, and nowadays employers don't much care for a man when his hair turns grey.

Nurse assured me that in house after house, in room after room—for there are three or four families in every house—it was very much the same. Out of work! Out of work! was the main theme, with a running accompaniment of various chest and throat diseases, new babies, dying children, and more than a suspicion, felt but unexpressed, of a radically unsanitary state of affairs proceeding from deficient subsoil drainage—a subtle something that seemed to tell one that the primitive marsh, though apparently subdued, still existed down below. A more thoroughly depressing place one could hardly imagine. Many good ladies and gentlemen are moved at times to go and visit among these poverty-stricken habitations; but as a rule they soon give it up, leaving it to mission workers; perhaps we had better follow their example, yet it is a district not easily to be forgotten. I am happy to state that our good Scotch visitor, whom I mentioned in my last paper, has been down there with some of the money sent us by working men in work.

Leaving Battersea, let us cross the river and go north to Latimer Road, Notting Hill, also a comparatively new neighbourhood and a most wretched one, a far more wretched-looking one than the Battersea district we have just quitted, but having the advantage of a higher and healthier situation.

Latimer Road Station is on the Outer Circle Railway. From the line you only get a faint idea of the extent of the neighbourhood, but you have probably noticed the carpet-beating in the open spaces and the gipsies' caravans that are put up in certain yards when not required.

I shall never forget visiting Latimer Road on a summer Sunday evening, nearly three years ago, for certain local peculiarities made a deep impression upon me. The gipsies are a distinct feature. Some kind people have little tea-parties on Sundays, to which the wild girls of the place are invited, and after tea go to church. I went to church with one of these parties and very much interested I was. There was a typical young gipsy girl next to me, with oh, such bright dark eyes, so full of mischief,

such an olive skin, with such a fine flush of colour in the cheeks, and such a brilliant blue necklace! She kneeled beside me, chanting the Psalms at the top of her good voice, evidently with the greatest enjoyment of the music; then suddenly she would lunge out with her strongly-booted foot and the girl on the other side of her would wrinkle up her face as if she had just been kicked, while the gipsy went on with her chanting more vigorously than ever.

That whole district seemed positively swarming with human life—every street, every door-step, every basement kitchen in the tramps' lodging-house, every upper room—and a more disreputable lot of people, taken as a whole, it would be hard to find.

We have an excellent nurse in this part of the Latimer Road district, and very queer stories she could tell, but they would be more of the "slum" and chronic-want character than glimpses of Out-of-Work London. There is, however, another part of the same district where people are quite as poor—indeed, really poorer—but where they are far more industrious and striving.

The boys of Harrow School have taken this neighbourhood under their protection; they support a well-organized mission there, and one of our nurses is part of the staff. It was she who told me that sad story about the out-of-work painters and the quiet little children. Nearly the whole of her district has been in terrible straits this past winter, and is only very slowly getting into work again; and for some of the men even if work came now they could not take it. One man, whose family we visited, and whom Nurse knew well, some weeks ago had declared that he *would* find work—that he would not return home until he *had* found work. He set off on a long tramp, walked to Bristol, stopping at many a town on the way. He constantly wrote to his wife. Disappointed time after time, he still always finished with, "Cheer up, my girl, I *will* get work somehow!" So he went hoping on and tramping on; but the farther he went the worse things looked. He got as far as Coventry, and then was forced to give up. He came back with what is called "a housemaid's knee," and when we called on his wife, he himself was laid up in the infirmary and his family receiving parish relief.

It is indeed saddening to think how many are now seeing this bright sunshine and hearing that things are beginning to look up a bit and that here and there a mate is starting work again, who must know that weary weeks must pass before strength even to look for employment will return to them. Too many men have gone down this winter never to rise again; those who all the year round are going over the same ground, visiting the same houses and rooms, know only too well how this winter has told on the bread-winners. Other men there are whose health, although severely shaken, is not radically injured. Some of the money we

have received has gone to such cases as these, and has been spent in giving food to the man who has just got work, and so has helped him through the first week until the wages have been paid, thus preventing the break-down that so often succeeds a long period of privation.

We have a homely Seaside Home at Southend, of which our guests always speak with the greatest enthusiasm. The matron, with whom every one who has been under her care is personally deeply in love, and whose praises I have heard sung in more poor London districts than I could mention, tells us that her guests are quite as much the victims of want as of disease.

"What is the matter with you?" is her usual question as they arrive.

"General debility, matron," was a recent answer; "at least that's what the doctor calls it, but if I told the truth I should say trouble and starvation."

Trouble and starvation! That is, indeed, the true story of nearly all our patients. A fortnight at Southend, which means generous living for fifteen days without having to think how it is to be paid for, has sent many a failing man or woman back to London fit to fight once more the stern hard battle of artisan life; and with improved looks and perhaps a "rig-out" from our store of clothes, it has often happened that an employer has at once taken on a man who, ill and shabby, would not have had a chance of even an odd job.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of a nice long and very cosy chat with a lady who superintends one of our more central districts. I am glad, of course, that she is a real person, but whenever I see her I long for the freedom of fiction that I might describe her as she is. In fact, the one complaint I have to make against our Mission is, that it abounds with good and very characteristic people and that I am not allowed to reveal either them or their excellences to the reader. This is a cross which I strive to bear meekly, but which imposes an ever-present and irksome restraint; for there is nothing that I enjoy more than getting a portrait on paper. Alas! how dearly I have sometimes paid for that pleasure! "Never no more, my friend! Never no more!" This is what I often have to tell myself, lingering, as at this very moment, dangerously near the brink of temptation. There—I will do my duty! She shall be a blank! I will leave out all that makes her what she is—all her bright genial, kind-hearted ways, her shrewd common sense.

She looks after hundreds of families, innumerable mothers, still more innumerable babies. At her large meeting she drives quite a wholesale trade; and if, as drapers say, "her line is desperate," her stock is first-rate. She has a Bible-woman and a nurse; she is a Guardian of the poor, she sits on boards and on endless committees; she has lately been helping in the distribution of the

Mansion House Fund. "I shall come at such a time and bring my patent pump with me." Thus I made an appointment with her.

So I went, but, dear thing, she required no pumping! She began at once.

"Well, you know, I've only been running errands for them; and some of it's done good and some hasn't. I was sent to one house; I knew the people. They were having tea. They said, 'But lor, mum, you must get very tired and thirsty with running about all day—you'd better have a cup of tea!' So I had a cup, then I took out two florins and a shilling and laid them on the table, fearing that the gift might be considered too small. The wife took them up. 'Look here, old man,' she said. 'We didn't expect all this, did we? Five shillings is a deal of money for us poor people!' And she turned the coins over and over as if she had never before seen anything so beautiful. I was afraid that her married daughter, who had had tickets and not coin, would feel aggrieved, so I said I was sorry I hadn't anything for her that time. 'Oh, never mind,' she returned quite pleasantly, 'I've had my share.'"

But some have been really abusive. They've looked at the money like the cabman when you have given him only his legal fare.

"'What's this? What's a paltry six shillings? Do you know there's been £60,000 collected for us? And to go and give us *this*!' They've no idea of the size of London nor of the number of people out of work. Oh, but some have been very nice, and as soon as it has been given they've called out to the people in the next room just like children, 'Oh, come and see what I've got!' and the others have seemed almost as pleased. I was sent to one family with a second donation. A little girl, who somehow connected her new boots with my last visit, ran up to me and put her foot and its very muddy boot on my knee to show me her new treasure; she was delighted with it."

I think it was in this house my friend had seen a teapot full of pawn-tickets. She was exceedingly amused with the little girl and her new boots.

"But I was obliged to rebel in several instances. I said, 'I really can't take the money to these cases; I know they are not suitable', and I refused and begged for others I could depend upon. Once or twice, though, I obeyed orders against my own inclination, and the people I was sent to weren't sober for some time after." Which reminds me that one of our nurses had told me a few days before that she had had tickets given her for people she knew were undeserving, and others to whom she would have been so thankful to have taken them were going without. "I did not like it, but I could not help it," she said, and subsequent events showed that she too had been right. Which shows very plainly

that in all these distributions the advice of those intimately acquainted with the neighbourhood should be sought.

"Well, I think on the whole we did a great deal of good," continued my friend. "We got tools out of pawn, and so on. One woman who was a clever machine hand had lost her machine; we redeemed that for her. Now she is in work and is paying us back in instalments. Then we found out several people whom we could help further. For instance, there was a man who had had pleurisy and was still very weak; we've sent him away to Ramsgate. Then several have joined our Meeting in consequence of our visits, and best of all we have found fresh openings for real Bible-work. But the fund has now nearly come to an end, and work is slowly coming back again."

After a little talk about different things, she said:

"A friend of mine who works in Marylebone says, 'In Marylebone we live upon luxuries, so this winter we have been badly off.'"

I did not see this very clearly at first; but found it to mean that in Marylebone, as doubtless in other West End neighbourhoods, the luxuries of the rich find the homely comforts for the artisans. Now this year there has been a great falling off in the luxuries, and consequently a proportionate curtailment of the homely comforts. The lesson is obvious—those who have money should spend just now as much as they in prudence can. In the present state of affairs the liberal buyer, if he be also the prompt payer, is distinctly a public benefactor. Unfortunately, the luxurious classes are apt to take very long credit; if some of them who have consciences knew the fatal results to the poor of their tardy payments, they would sooner live on the scantiest fare than incur the guilt of such crimes; therefore, while I say, Buy, I add, But only buy what you can speedily pay for; that is, supposing you want to do good by your purchases.

But I am afraid I shall be accused of holding a brief for Out-of-Work London. Well, our reports of yesterday were still one long wail of sickness, destitution, and out of work. What a panorama of suffering passed before our minds as the plain unvarnished details of case after case, in district after district, were read aloud to us! No, Out-of-Work London is still a grim reality. There is not, in the present state of trade, work for all to do; there will not be, it is feared, by those who know best, for many a long day yet. Everything that can be done to keep working country people from coming to town ought to be done; every channel for new work in our colonies that can be opened up ought to be opened.

I am not, however, prepared to say that the British working man, any more than the British employer or the much-abused capitalist, is absolutely without blame. There are a good many sides to most questions, especially to Out-of-Work London; also there are several ways of stating things. For instance, there is an

old gardener of ninety, who still delights to potter about a garden I know, and still more delights in a friendly chat.

"I had a brother once who was killed at Waterloo," he will begin, slowly and solemnly. Imagination pictures the hero's glorious death on the battle-field.

After a long pause the old man goes on :

"It were three days after the battle, it were ! He were a-coming along with a bottle of gin in his hand, and his comrades says to him, 'You'd best mind what you're after with that bottle,' for they see he weren't quite steady ; but he wouldn't take no heed, and presently he fell down and the bottle smashed into him and cut him awful, so he died."

There are doubtless plenty of out-of-work men about who truly *are out of work*, but for whom one would have little compassion could one know all their story. Still this sad winter has brought to our notice not once but many times an heroic fortitude which we ought to be grateful indeed to know is possessed by countrymen of our own. Seldom has anything touched me more deeply than the true incident with which I close.

A certain family lived all last winter on tickets, which gave them three days a week soup and bread, and they made it last them the other days as well. The father *could not* get work. He is a good husband and father, and when dinner-time came those days of short food, he always went out that he might not run the risk of being tempted to share the scanty meal. Work came at last. He rejoiced and worked hard ; but in a month or so his health gave way. This Mission, however, was a great help to him and he recovered. I am most thankful to hear he is now in a good situation.

Do not think there is no Out-of-Work London because the May sun is shining. Bible-women and Nurses know there is.

LIZZIE ALLDRIDGE.

THE HEART'S WEAKNESS.

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER J. ALLEN.

WHICH is the weakest thing of all
Mine heart can ponder ?
The sun a little cloud can pall
With darkness yonder.
The cloud a little wind can move
Where'er it listeth ;
The wind, a little leaf above,
Though sere resisteth.

What time that yellow leaf was green
My days were gladder ;
But now, whatever Spring may mean,
I must grow sadder.
Ah me ! a *leaf* with sighs can wring
My lips asunder—
Then is mine heart the weakest thing
Itself can ponder.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XII.

DENE ABBEY.

AT the corner of the street Mr. Pemberton and his phaeton stood waiting. A light conveyance, drawn by two prime specimens of horseflesh; beside them a tall, limp, fair, philanthropic-looking young man. His animals showed uncontrollable impatience, and no wonder. They had been kept there all the time that Charlotte had been haranguing me.

"Mr. Pemberton, ahoy! Don't go away; here I am," shouted Miss Hope, hailing him from a distance as if he were a ship, causing the passers-by to turn and look, making him blush with annoyance. "Splendid fellows," she exclaimed as she came up, patting the horses' heads, with an unconscious glance of invidious comparison at their master.

"It is four o'clock," he remarked, "and if, as you said, you wish to return here in time for the night's performance——"

"Servant," said Miss Hope, springing lightly to the front seat before he could assist her, and forgetting to explain me to him at all. Politely taking me for granted, he assisted me to mount behind, dismissed his servant, who had instructions to bring over our stage luggage, took the reins and drove off. The horses were strong and skittish, and he managed them with a skilful ease so devoid of flourish that it excited no admiration in you, as for difficulty overcome. Just as the high C taken without strain by a true soprano creates no sensation, whilst the *prima donna* who appears to imperil her life in the effort brings down the house. The man's whole character was in his driving. Nothing in him ever fetched what it was worth.

Miss Hope regarded him frankly at a loss. He was so markedly unlike those green-room *habitués* of high degree, upon whom mostly is founded the British actor's idea of the British aristocracy. Mr. John Pemberton looked like an amateur clergyman by comparison. What an admirable schoolmaster was lost to the world in him!

"Have you drawn up your programme?" he asked of her by-and-by.

"Subject to her Grace's approval," replied Charlotte grandly, "and as follows: First night—'Miss.' By desire. Not my desire, if you please."

"The Duchess's particular wish," he explained. "She has a high admiration for Bret Harte's works, which to some extent I share."

Man alive, what a left-handed compliment to Miss Hope! Not a word about her "unrivalled impersonation," "two-world triumphs," and so forth. She resumed:

"Second night—'The Sheep in Wolf's Clothing,' the principal character by Miss Adams, who sits behind you," choosing for presentation this rather awkward moment, considering our respective positions in the carriage.

"Jasper Carew is Edwin Davenant's pet part," Charlotte continued. "Then follows the balcony scene from 'Romeo and Juliet.' I play Romeo; you don't object?" looking at him with mock gravity.

"There is always something to object to, in my opinion, in a reversal of the *rôles* of the sexes." ("Prig!" Miss Hope managed this cleverly aside to me.) "Approve it entirely I cannot. Still, in a purely poetical creation like Romeo it is more tolerable and may pass."

Miss Hope glanced at her neighbour's inexpressive features and loose-jointed figure comically, as if conjecturing how *he* would look in the part, then remarked with decision, "It must pass. Those who don't like it may just stop away. We have to do what can be done without rehearsal. And now, Mr. Pemberton, I've a very particular favour to ask you."

He looked more frightened than flattered to hear it. She saw nothing, finding the prancing horses a more entertaining spectacle than her Jehu.

"It is," she continued, "that Miss Adams, who is ready to superintend the stage arrangements for to-morrow, and the unpacking of our boxes, may have house-room for to-night also at the Abbey. It will save incalculable trouble."

"Is that all?" he asked, relieved. "We can provide accommodation for as many of your number as you like to send in advance."

"Thank you kindly; but one head is better than a dozen. Miss Adams will see to everything; she knows exactly what is wanted."

This was an unmitigated fib, but I hoped to make it true. Already we had passed through the lodge gates, and the roofs of the Abbey, lying sheltered and low, soon peeped through the trees—a country house whose plain style removes all temptation, happily, to minute description. Old Dene Abbey, in another part of the park, was a ruin whose picturesque bits were carefully built up again as fast as bad weather brought them down; the substantial modern dwelling-house called after it might have been a school or small barrack for its straight-lined, spic-and-span monotony of outline. Nevertheless, as we drove down the hill,

amid stretches of park land studded with branching trees, and among them the gigantic ash, under whose shade, according to a dear old ballad, the last Earl of Dene Dene murdered his brother, the divinity that doth hedge a duke, or even a duchess dowager, set me trembling like a leaf. To be sure, Mr. Pemberton was no such very alarming specimen, but you can never judge from the men of the family, you know.

The ladies—Mr. Pemberton was told by the servants, who, unlike Mr. Danvers' myrmidons, received us in the front hall as respectfully as if we were bishops—had not returned from their drive. He led us into a second, larger, white stone hall beyond, which some village carpenters were hard at work converting into a poor apology for a theatre. "What a shame!" hissed Miss Hope in my ear. "Here have we been playing at Broadgate in a capital theatre night after night to empty benches, and to-morrow all the county will crowd to see us on this absurdity of a stage, all appliances wanting, and rush for stalls at a guinea apiece!"

With her wonted lucidity and rapidity, she gave the needful directions to the carpenters, which I was deputed to stay and see carried out. This done, she signified to Mr. Pemberton she must be driven back immediately. No time for more than a parting whisper to me.

"Here you stay for three days, safe enough. Won't Slater be wild? He daren't look you up here. I shall play the innocent, of course."

"And then?" I asked.

"Oh, we'll see when the time comes."

For her, to stave off a difficulty till the day after to-morrow seemed the same as to stave it off for ever. More than once she had been justified by the event. But when I heard the phaeton wheels roll away, judge how I felt, left behind in that lone, large country mansion, every door that slammed reminding you of the size of the place by its resounding echoes, every stroke of the workmen's hammer likewise. Like a castaway on a rock, I felt safe from sharks certainly—I quailed when I thought of Slater—but not otherwise comfortable, and very much out of place. Happily I had no leisure for thinking, and when I had made sure of the smooth working of the sliding doors of Jasper Carew's practicable cupboard and other scenic devices, I must proceed to the unpacking of Miss Hope's elaborate costumes, Miss's rags as artistic a study in their way as the Montague's velvet suit. Two rooms had been assigned me on the ground floor in a wing of the house. At eight my dinner was brought me in my sitting-room, where, towards ten o'clock, I was still busy with stage preparations, when I had an unexpected visitor in the person of Mr. John Pemberton's wife.

Strikingly pretty she looked, as she stood on the threshold in a

soft silky white dinner-dress of some costly Indian texture. Her childlike air had something in it of a queen's confidence of conferring a favour by her mere presence. A fair lady, out of doubt, yet the very last you would have expected Mr. John Pemberton to choose for a wife, was the simple reflection I made then.

"I have come to see if you have everything you want," said she, beaming on me condescendingly, like some child-angel come to scatter Christmas gifts.

"Everything, thank you very much; that is, if I might ask the housekeeper for a little more gum arabic, and some meteoric plate-powder."

"Send for whatever you wish," she said, glancing round at the scattered bits of theatrical bric-à-brac, with a light passing curiosity, then at me as at another bit.

"Have you been long on the stage?" she inquired presently.

"A little more than a year. It seems longer."

"Do you not like it?"

"Sometimes," I said cautiously.

"You must get very tired of acting the same part night after night," she rejoined—a remark we all get very tired of hearing made us at every turn. I always make the same answer.

"There are so many things we have to repeat every day of our lives—dressing, dining, and so on. The play is much more interesting, and after all never quite the same two nights running."

She laughed, and seated herself on the sofa, playing with Juliet's dagger, pulling it in and out of its sheath.

"Tell me something about your company," she began.

I was being regularly interviewed, it appeared. Now what could I think of to say about ourselves that would amuse Lady Mabel Pemberton?

"Mr. Slater upholds the star system," I said. "Miss Hope is his star. The rest of us are a mere Milky Way, and give no light in particular."

"Ah, Miss Hope," she repeated with a careless laugh. "What a singular person she is!"

"Yes, she has no rival, in her particular line."

"I meant that she is singularly plain," she made haste to retort, "and not young at all for a star-actress."

"She is not so pretty as you," I mused as I viewed the charming little nondescript before me, "and has had to slave twenty years to win the good things, which I dare say, from your cradle, every one has come like the Magi to lay at your feet." Mr. Pemberton's wife struck me as spoilt, indiscreet, flighty, affected, inconsiderate. So you thought, whilst falling, all the same, under, the charm of the little Irresponsible, whose very faults formed part of her attractions, to strangers, who had not to suffer from them.

"Miss Hope is my only real friend in the company," I observed. "Indeed? I thought—" she began, with embarrassing significance.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Oh, nothing," she said amused. "It was in the Broadgate paper, you know."

That I and Edwin Davenant were engaged? Yes, I knew. "And the Lynmouth paper said it was Miss Torrens he was engaged to," I rejoined aloud. "There is not a word of truth in either report. For me he cares no more than—than could I for him."

"Well," she replied sympathizingly, "I can believe you. What a pity such a good actor should be so affected and conceited except when he is acting. But there, perhaps, they are all rather alike."

"A little," I said without thinking, "except Mr. Gifford."

"Mr. Gifford is no actor," she reminded me promptly and haughtily; "Mr. Gifford is——"

"A gentleman," I suppose she was going to say, but she checked herself.

"An amateur," I suggested, noticing with surprise that my little lady had not learnt how to control her expression. And the rare rose-pink of her complexion, which led unkind people to assert that she painted, vindicated its true quality by fading out altogether for a second. I continued, "Yet the artists defer to him, he is so clever."

"Mr. Gifford has genius," she said unhesitatingly, "and that is the difference."

It was downright cruel of Mr. Pemberton to choose to interrupt us just at this moment. But men are so conceited. They never dream they can be in the way when only women are present. Lady Mabel—it was her gift, or trick—had contrived to interest me extraordinarily in the space of ten minutes. She was so unlike what I had expected, such a flagrant departure from any lawful, approved type of an English high-born beauty. What maiden dream of hers, I must wonder, was that which Mr. Gifford's name recalled, since she could not hear that name without starting? And what a change in her countenance now! From earnest and wistful it had become wilful and provoking beyond the power of any but child or demon.

"Mabel," began Mr. Pemberton in a tone of long-suffering nearing its end, and of latent reproof, "they are all asking for you." He was looking, not at her, but at me. Was I fit company for his wife for more than five minutes? was what he was thinking. I rather think my youth and the sober dark dress I had on disarmed criticism, which naturally annoyed the critic. Evidently he disliked seeing his wife here.

"Oh, I am coming presently," she replied. "I shall stay here another half-hour, if I think proper," was what she meant, and he knew it. She distinctly resented the interference; whilst his

demeanour was that of one convinced he has yielded too often to perverse caprices of the sort.

Closing the door, he came and stood by the fire, as if to await his wife's pleasure, but definitely cutting short our *tête-à-tête*. It was checkmate to Lady Mabel, who hated being thwarted, as most of us do. Better for Mr. Pemberton had he yielded, like a commonplace, weak-minded, henpecked husband. My presence kept my lady silent, but her expressive face declared for her that this was the last drop, causing the cup of provocation to overflow.

"Perhaps as Mr. Pemberton is here," said I, "he will be so good as to give his opinion about something I am in doubt about. I think Juliet's balcony, as set, is too high, which would spoil the effect of the scene."

"Oh, let us go and see," exclaimed Lady Mabel, welcoming the diversion, and taking for accident what he, I saw from his face, put down as a very strange piece of tact on my part. We found the White Hall empty, the carpenters gone to supper, a couple of gas jets burning, sufficient to illumine the balcony scene. We gathered on the stage to inspect it.

"It looks to me quite correct," said Mr. Pemberton judiciously. "I do not see what alteration is required."

"Oh, but I do," objected his wife quick as thought. "Stay there and I'll show you."

She had espied the ladder-like staircase behind, leading to the balcony, and quickly tripped aloft, placing herself in Juliet's position, and looking down on our two figures below. Mr. Pemberton's countenance showed his rising annoyance. She seemed to perceive nothing, exclaiming:

"Miss Adams is perfectly right. You could not look up without craning your neck. Try, one of you."

"He jests at scars that never felt a wound!"

Very softly she repeated the line, but with a speaking, too-felicitous emphasis.

There she sat aloft, the violets from her dress came falling over the balustrade, strewing the boards under our feet. Mr. Pemberton was plainly in despair at this childish, freakish behaviour—as it were her petty revenge for his insistence just now. I had drawn aside, and sat down behind the masonry of Capulet's house, thinking wisely, as behoves a third person, how foolish are all such altercations, open or implied, between husband and wife, and how savage they can be, about such trifles too!

Lady Mabel, ignoring all hints, all entreating signs to her to desist, went on reciting snatches, as if to herself, till fortunately memory failed her.

"Pray come down," he said, in an agony lest the carpenters should return and find his wife disporting herself on a stage balcony.

"You must own it is much too high," she persisted regardlessly.

"I leave that for Miss Adams to settle with the workmen. I do not pretend—nor, I imagine, will you—to have the experience requisite in such matters. And now," he concluded, glancing at his watch, "unless it is your intention to desert your guests altogether——"

"Well?" she said, with a faint ring of defiance in her tone.

"You will not persist in making yourself conspicuous by your absence any longer."

"I am surprised that my presence should be missed," she retorted readily, "and above all that you should consider it indispensable for their better entertainment."

"It is no question of entertainment, but of common courtesy and propriety. These at least you have not let drop hitherto; and when that happens I am really at a loss what excuses to make for you."

"Pray make none. I had rather bear their censure than those excuses," was her quick reply, audibly given.

Ought I to cough or to sneeze, to remind them that I was near? Perhaps Mr. Pemberton thought me gone. But she, who could see me where I sat, seemed moved to cast appearances to the winds. It was clearly but the climax of long-standing discord.

The best-bred people are but human, and her exasperating speech provoked him to reply with pointed reproach:

"It is true you have accustomed them to expect such strange treatment from your hands that it would scarcely be possible for you to astonish them."

"I wonder," she sighed to herself low, "*I wonder!*" leaning her head on her hand, a very Juliet-like picture.

Romeo, I think, had not heard. Judging persistence worse than useless, he walked away. The very doors shutting behind him had reprobation in their echoes, taken up by his measured tread as he re-entered the drawing-room. Juliet pressed both hands to her face, in agitation becoming uncontrollable. Then she came flying down the rickety stairs so heedlessly that she tripped, and would have fallen had not I, starting from my seat, caught her in my arms.

She drew her hand across her eyes, gave me a blank stare, pale and a little wild, exclaiming bitterly and impetuously:

"Oh, Miss Adams, take care whom you marry!"

The idea of finding a clue to this extraordinary scene in one of those strange nervous temperaments whose vagaries defy all calculation, had crossed me just now, but without lessening my perplexity at this moment. She looked so tragically wretched that almost any woman's heart must have ached for the poor pretty thing, and I could have cried for sympathy. She sank down on the bench beside me, breathless and sobbing hysterically.

"Dear Lady Mabel, how unhappy you look!" I said with sincere solicitude.

"I am the most miserable woman alive," she declared passionately.

"You don't mean it. Think how miserable poor women can be."

"You——" she took her hands from her face, and began, speaking fast and excitedly, "Yes, but you can forget your miseries; you have work to do and know yourselves of use, free too, and leading an active life, with plenty of change, and above all no time to think. You can never know or even guess what life may become in a position where not only is nothing but mechanical conformity required of you, but should you venture to see with your own eyes, to feel, think, speak, act for yourself, such audacity is cried down as unbecoming, persistence in it as criminal almost."

"Yet not one of us but would gladly change places with you."

"Would they?" she said. "They would be wrong." She rose restlessly and stood leaning against the stage framework, shading her face with her hand.

"You can never know what it is to want for friends, for love, or for money. You should be happy."

My remark only provoked a glow of fresh vehemence.

"If to have your outer life made smooth for you, to be kept as they keep the silkworms in Italy, your least want a thing of vital importance, numbers of people busy taking care that your food, your surroundings, everything you touch, shall be of the softest and best—the very air you breathe carefully arranged for you—if that is happiness, then I am content. But suppose there never was a time when these things counted to you as of any worth, and when you did not need something different, and better, and beyond."

She stopped short in her eloquent protest, and concluded as in self-contempt:

"So you marry,—because you are in a hurry to try the only experiment in living that you can!"

How signally in a certain case the experiment had failed I might partly conjecture.

"No experiment," I could not help saying, "since you cannot go back."

"Nor forward. So at twenty your personal life is ended. You must reduce your mind to be the passive shadow of another's, even though it may have no affinity with your own, must evermore see no farther than he sees, desire nothing higher than he desires, limit your thoughts, your heart, your soul, your fancy where his end—take yourself at his valuation, though false. He chose you for what he thought he could make you, not for what you were in reality; then, finding you had and clung to a self that clashed with his favourite prejudices, suffers you for the future as a doll at his

table, a plaything not worth the cost, a troublesome, frivolous thing he has made his wife. This is a man's way of love, for which they say the world is well lost."

"Does it not mean," said I gravely, "that to win the love that is enough you must be willing to sacrifice something in yourself that you hold to?"

She did not seem to hear. The torrent of long pent-up words let loose was past checking now.

"I have leave to find happiness in dresses and dances and jewels if I can, since I cannot in providing blankets for the paupers in his almshouses or pinafores for the school-children. He has his life apart, and there I hamper him. And so it must go on till one or the other of us dies—he chafing under the burden, I under the humiliation of knowing myself one. Who says that it would be doing him wrong to release him?"

"Lady Mabel!" I gasped, horror-struck, but convinced now I was in the presence of one of those nervously-excitabile, variable natures who at certain moments do seem almost irresponsible. Born in another station she would have been a medium and had trances. Probably she would recollect nothing to-morrow of what she was now saying. In her right senses, of course, she would never have come out with a word.

But why had she chosen Mr. Pemberton, her antitype, for the life-experiment? And why had it failed so signally? And why must they dispute so about trifles, and she be so unreasonable and he so provoking? And above all, what incredible thought, what audacity of imagination had prompted her last words, making me draw back from her, for, though wildly spoken, I felt there a touch of the spirit of one set on burning her ships.

But as she stood there with her starry eyes, her pretty, helpless look of passionate appeal, and face like a boy-poet's, she would have disarmed a Draco. Nay, I could believe it was an outbreak of frenzy, that her griefs were as imaginary as Miss Alice's, her rebellious speculations mere froth. An only daughter, a young wife, her case could not be desperate. Mr. Pemberton seemed sorely tried, but no more seriously disturbed than you are by the freaks of a kitten that chooses to frisk on the mantelshelf, destroying your best china ornaments. I drew her down on the bench beside me; a burst of nervous tears came and relieved her brain. I bathed her temples with eau-de-cologne; her emotion was fast subsiding, and I foresaw that as she recovered her reason she would recover her reticence, perhaps look back with a shock of horror on her involuntary self-abandonment. But she seemed slowly to be waking out of a dream.

"Where am I? what have I been saying?" she asked dazedly.

"You spoke as if you were not quite happy—as if you had something on your mind," I answered.

"Did I?" she said, attempting to smile. "I suppose I am not

quite well." She looked at me uneasily, afraid to question further; then, as if instinctively reassured, laid her hand on mine, saying: "You must forget it."

"I will try," said I. There was something so touching in her helplessness and hopeless distress which, whether justifiable or not, was as real as a child's grief over a broken toy, that my voice trembled slightly. She stared at me, not offended, but with some wonder; then, on a sudden impulse, leaned forward and kissed my cheek as she might some foster-sister's—some dependant, whose sympathy you may take for granted, and may take or leave as you think proper.

Mr. Pemberton's next move was a wise one; it was to send the stage-carpenters to alter the scene under my directions, thus removing all temptation to his wife to linger. All traces of agitation had vanished from her manner. She was pale when she left me, but as seemingly composed and self-possessed as though we had passed the last half-hour in determining the level of Capulet's balcony.

The quick change—spontaneous too, and not due to any effort of self-command on her part—was the last of a series of surprises, and would have baffled idle speculation had I been minded or able to indulge in it. But the next morning brought me a stock of employment Lady Mabel should have envied me. In the afternoon the actors came over. Miss Hope and Annie were quartered with me in the wing adjoining the front hall. I had no time to remember that such a person existed as Mr. Slater, or that my situation, by the day after to-morrow, would be little better than that of the destitute orphans we were performing for to-night.

CHAPTER XIII.

MASKS AND FACES.

UNTIL seven o'clock we were hard at work on the stage decorations. At eight the curtain rose on the first scene of "Miss."

Such gala nights are bound to be the dulllest, in a dramatic way. Even Miss Hope, upon whom everything rested, acted a degree less finely than her wont, and the attention of the audience was most unequally divided between the play and the details of the inside of Dene Abbey, to treat themselves to the sight of which, and not of our mountebank selves, their guineas had been paid. You could guess, without hearing, the comments that went on.

"Wonderful get-up, that Miss—what is her name?—Pope—Hope? The Indian girl to the life! And did you see, Julia; they've got brass-work fire irons in the hall like ours?"

"How perfectly lovely Lady Mabel looks to-night," sighs Julia

enthusiastically, "with her hair loose at the back. Can that be coming into fashion? Not ladylike? Oh, mamma!"

"No, nor even proper for a married lady," returns mamma with decision. "The dear Duchess recognized me in the crowd as we came in. She looks more delicate than ever; they say her life hangs by a thread. The fatigue of this affair can hardly be safe for her, but she is so wonderfully energetic for an invalid. There's Mr. Pemberton. What a nice face he has!" and here mother and daughter agree, for all ladies, I observed, joined in a chorus of praise over the Duchess's son-in-law, his perverse little wife excepted.

Behind the footlights the selfsame spirit prevailed. The appalling aristocracy of the front rows distracted the most democratic heads in the company. We forgot our parts, we lost our cues when the audience omitted to applaud in the right places. Nobody was the wiser. Having only the small part of a schoolgirl in "Miss," I passed most of the time at the wings, taking notes with Beattie Graves.

"See our friend Gifford half a dozen rows back?" he whispered. "You look startled, Miss Adams. Don't you know he's been amusing himself this long time at Moonstone Court, near here? A fast lot!" and he winked unutterable things; "but furious fun goes on there, I'm told. Lots of daughters, no money, and Lady Moonstone making a dead set at him for the eldest. Eight-and-twenty, plain, and rather blue. See him between her—she's in mauve—and the mother with a face like a parrot. Can a sensible man so lose his head that the mere tinkling in his ears of an empty title——"

The immediate danger was to Mr. Graves' head, so intent on Mr. Gifford's foibles that he needed twice reminding they were waiting for him on the stage. But he was soon back at my side, taking stock of the spectators afresh.

"Who is the old mummy in decorations beside Lady Mabel?" he asked. "They look like my favourite etching at home out of the 'Dance of Death,' the skeleton whispering to the beauty in the ball-room."

So they did, except that the skeleton, a distinguished foreign diplomatist, had an air of smooth enjoyment of life which made him the cheerful object of the two. Lady Mabel's demeanour to-night puzzled me again. She was outwardly self-possessed, joining with characteristic animation in her neighbour's comments. Only once, when the play had reached its climax and whisperings ceased, and Miss and her sorrows commanded the attention of the most careless, I saw her, as the tension of feeling herself under observation relaxed, sink into herself, and her gaze, suddenly abstracted, showed that her mind was playing truant. No one else was watching her, to remark it. As for Mr. Pemberton, he was taken up with his arduous efforts to fulfil his duty at once

to the actors who had given their services, and to the audience who had given their money, anxious too to spare the Duchess every possible fatigue. No great social exertion, I understood, but was attended with risk to her; yet it was a risk the cheerful invalid insisted on running now and then.

I think everybody was secretly glad when the play was over. Music may promote conversation; acting must check it. The din of tongues burst forth freely at once. Now the majority of the audience flocked into the front hall, to be taken off by their carriages, a number of the personal friends of the family remaining to supper, which was immediately announced. I saw Lady Mabel go in on the mummy's arm, Mr. Gifford escorting Lady Moonstone's thoughtful, rather sad-looking eldest daughter. Our turn came later. By the time we had changed our stage-dresses Mr. Pemberton was free to come and offer his arm, with scrupulous courtesy, to Miss Hope, I following with Beattie Graves, who implored me not to desert him, miserable married man though he was, for that coxcomb Davenant—constrained to pair off with Annie, to their mutual discontent.

"I like to see Charlotte doing the *grande dame*," whispered Graves. "Observe her air as she swept by! By Jove, you'd think she'd been born in a castle of her own. I wager she's perishing for a cigarette and some porter. I am, I know. Now what can I get you?" shaking his head over the refreshments, chiefly confectionery, in the dining-room. "Fluff and froth—fairies' food! Is an Englishman expected to sustain his strength on kickshaws?"

Short was our stay, for the crowd—the same that had granted us but a broken attention on the stage—here set together to stare us out of countenance. "Madam, I am *not* the Two-Headed Nightingale," Mr. Graves kept muttering to an old lady whose spectacled eyes never left him, till his temper appeared to be going, and I got him away, telling him he would certainly insult somebody of consequence if he stayed.

"Very like," he admitted as we escaped into the ante-room. "And now to profit by the situation, for I mean to. Aid and abet me, Miss Adams. You've been here some time already, and must know your way about. I never was in a dukery before; I probably never shall be again. Show me over. 'Copy' for a paper in the *Era* almanack, 'Theatricals at Dene Abbey.' That's what I'm thinking. I'll take the front hall here to begin with."

All the ground-floor rooms except those in our wing were thrown open, so there seemed no objection to humouring his whim.

"Not that way," I cautioned him, as he made for a door opposite. "It leads to the kitchen stairs."

"Does it? I'd like to take it, then," he said, beginning his jottings. "Big fireplace—dogs—deer's horns—umbrella-stand,"

like a valuer making an inventory. We explored, unmolested, morning-room, Japanese-room, drawing-room, and ante-rooms various, concluding with the empty library, closed by folding doors at one end. "What's behind?" said he.

"I think it's the chapel," I replied.

"Chapel? I must bring in the chapel." The doors yielded to his hand, and we passed through. It was pitch dark beyond, and he began fumbling for a light, when faint voices struck on our ears.

"Am I anticipated?" he whispered. "Davenant—confound him!—taking notes for a rival article? Hush! Hark! the ghosts!"

The voices were not in the chapel, but came through the half-open door of a recess communicating with a passage. All I saw was the white sweep of a lady's train; all I heard was the sound of her companion's voice saying low, but with a strange, troubled emphasis:

"You know you command me absolutely."

"Gifford!" Graves whispered sharply in my ear. "Did you hear? The devil! Why, that fellow's a perfect Don Juan. I must find out who 'you' is. What's more, I've my suspicions."

"You must not," said I. Then, perceiving at once it was vain to reason with my incorrigible companion, I said, raising my voice, "Come back into the library for a candle, Mr. Graves. I dislike the dark."

The ghosts were already gone. There were other exits from the passage leading to the reception-rooms, and we heard the door of one of these open and shut.

"What a little spoil-sport you are!" muttered my comrade crossly.

"It's not the part of a gentleman to play the spy," I told him severely.

"I'm not a gentleman," he retorted curtly.

"Then I beg your pardon," said I, "for having known you so long without finding it out."

At this he laughed, made peace in the library, and before we said good-night in the hall he was praying me to promise to be his partner again to-morrow night for the grand finish. After the performance there was to be a display of fireworks and illuminations at the old abbey ruins, got up by the tenants, which we should all drive over to see.

"I've a trap here," said he. "Will you come?"

"With pleasure," said I.

"No, with me." On second thoughts he added, "Only it's a long time since I drove. I'm short-sighted, and I wouldn't upset you for worlds. It's not that I'm afraid, except of charging the coachmen here at the front door. What should you say to coming round to meet me at the little shrubby gate, down the drive? It will be better."

"Much better," I laughingly agreed with him.

The company had now dispersed; Mr. Graves went on his way to smoke somewhere, I on mine with Miss Hope and Annie to our sleeping-quarters. Charlotte sent me back into the White Hall for a fan she had left there. At the foot of the stairs Lady Mabel brushed past without seeing me. She might have been walking in her sleep. Her eyes were dilated; their expression was fixed and distant. I stood stock still, feeling cold and scared, as if I had seen the White Lady of the legend, whose appearance is the omen of a death in the household; or as if, in the thick of the fun and the frolic, I had read the handwriting on the wall foretelling the downfall of Dene Abbey.

Next morning I saw her again. We were shockingly late; but at noon, having to rehearse a scene with Davenant, I was passing the morning-room on my way to the hall, when Lady Mabel came out. I was thinking of her, as was natural, and looked at her with half-pitying, half-fascinated interest. She greeted me with a smile and a cheerful good-morning that discomfited me.

"Is all going on well?" she inquired, in her soft sweet voice.

"Pretty well," I replied mechanically, more and more perplexed.

"Has Juliet's balcony been set right?"

"Yes, it has been lowered three feet."

"I hope everything will go as smoothly and beautifully as last night."

"I hope so," I echoed, lost in wonder. What, she could stand there and smile, and talk of stage scenery, and entertain her friends, and give orders to the servants as usual, knowing all the while that her domestic peace was broken up—its show a mere pretence! And we professionals call ourselves actresses! Nay. I said to myself I had been dreaming, as she lingered talking for a few moments.

Very soon Mr. Pemberton, whose knack of interrupting us showed his distinct objection to seeing his wife discoursing with innocent me, followed her out of the morning-room.

"Mabel," he said, "you don't look very well, and I am afraid last night has been too much for you. You must be sure to take some hours' rest this afternoon."

"I am quite well," she answered coldly and constrainedly. "I am going to drive into Broadgate with the Hohendorffs."

"You had far better not," he expostulated. "You will be tired out."

"It is something new," she returned with a forced laugh, "to hear you talking of my ailments as if they positively existed. You say I can imagine myself into being ill in reality—perhaps, then, I can imagine myself into being well and strong in reality."

"I doubt if imagination would prove quite as efficient in the one case as in the other," he said, not ill-humouredly; but as she

was moving away he was so unlucky as to add uneasily, "If you knock yourself up you will be sure to have a headache, and be unable to come down to dinner."

"Ah, there's the cause of this sudden solicitude," I heard her say with light irony as I passed on. "Of course you are anxious lest I should make myself 'conspicuous by my absence' at the dinner-party. Do not be afraid. To-night, at all events, I will not fail to appear in my place at our table."

If I expected Mr. Pemberton to be up in arms at this extraordinary speech and the tone of it, I was undeceived. He let it pass with the dead calm of one who has long made up his mind to re-ent no thrusts openly, having found taking no notice the only way to stop scenes about nothing at all, and that the best certainty of preserving his temper is in shutting his ears to what is said on purpose to provoke it. But the show of indifference maddened her just then, I could see. Would he not see it, speak, and set her right?

No, he saw nothing before him but his wife in one of those characteristic fits of inconsequence he had invariably found become graver in proportion to the attention they succeeded in exciting.

The next minute I was on the stage, rehearsing the part of Anne Carew, the heroic wife, on whose devotion to her husband, Jasper, the plot hinges.

Jasper Carew, as all playgoers know, is hunted as a rebel by Judge Jeffreys' troops, under the ferocious Colonel Kirke. He is reported dead, being really concealed in a cupboard in his own house, whilst his wife, to avert suspicion, has to pretend to favour the addresses of the odious colonel, who has fallen in love with her. Ah! if the Pembertons had lived in those stirring days their union might have remained a loving one. Fancy the excitement of hiding your husband in a cupboard to save his life, at the risk of your both being burnt alive if it were discovered you were protecting his safety! It would prevent Lady Mabel from finding conjugal life dull, and Mr. Pemberton from worrying her about trifles, besides calling out such heroic qualities as each might possess. Times are changed, and our modern wife-heroines, our Frou-frous and Odettes, run off with their lovers to show their contempt for the world and society. But Lady Mabel, so young and so winning—she heartless, she depraved, and ready, at the least call, to forget her duties and get into mischief's way? It was a dreadful riddle I preferred to put out of my head.

During the short afternoon we actors, left to ourselves, lolled about the garden; time for me to study the character I was going to present. Charlotte had always praised my acting in this part. I had played it often enough to feel at home in it, and might hope not to fall below the mark to-night.

It was the opening piece. The audience presented mostly the same faces as yesterday, but the novelty of the thing having worn off, they paid the actors rather more attention. My rôle possessed me to-night; it was no matter to me if Davenant, trying to be sublime, was sometimes ludicrous, or that during our tenderest *tête-à-tête* he was unmistakably forgetful of his Anne—of everything but the sound of his own voice. I imagined myself the wife, the *soi-disant* widow, committed to the frightful task of keeping her husband's mortal enemy at bay by pretending to encourage his detested courtship, and between-whiles snatching moments of superlative bliss in the company of her best-beloved. I succeeded in forgetting myself in the part completely, and felt that night I was acting—and for the first time, strange though it may sound. But the stage-emotion that makes the actress had all but betrayed me into fatal disgrace. For at that most critical point, when to save Anne from the kiss claimed by her villainous suitor, Jasper starts from his hiding-place ready to rush forward, and all seems lost, but Anne, with a supreme effort of presence of mind, succeeds by a sudden ruse in averting both dangers, laughingly repelling Kirke and forcing him, still unsuspecting, out of the room and locks the door, I, in my incautious flurry, tripped and fell, partially saving myself by grasping the door-handle. A sharp pain in my ankle told me I was hurt; a simultaneous burst of applause that the mishap had passed for an effective stroke of stage business. Excitement took away the pain quickly; inspirited by success I acted on, nothing daunted, to the happy end, when, though the fugitive is discovered, Kirke is cheated of his prey, and husband and wife are allowed to join hands again in peace and safety.

I received such a share of applause as half turned my head. The cheers from a gallery reserved for the servants of the family were downright enthusiastic. Whether a part of this warm approval was bestowed on the virtue and heroism of Anne Carew rather than on the talent of Elizabeth Adams, I won't stop to inquire; but the villain Kirke, well acted by a useful member of Mr. Slater's company, I was surprised to see come in for no acknowledgment whatever of the same kind.

The Shakesperian scene followed, and whilst waiting for it at the wings I ran my eye over the audience. Mr. Gifford was not among them to-night. Beattie Graves, who had been over to Broadgate and met him there, had understood from him that he had left Moonstone Court and was on his way back to town. Within a few yards of me, among the dowagers and *pères nobles*, sat Lady Mabel. I had seen her before the curtain rose, looking to-night as if she had been turned to stone. Her eyes seemed to have grown larger, but expressionless; her lips were pale, her features rigid, and the outward immobility, though preserved without apparent effort on her part, was as unnatural

as that of one who has just passed through some awful extremity.

It haunted me through the play. Would nobody warn Mr. Pemberton of what now seemed to me plain—that his wife was losing her reason? He would not have listened. The remarkable thing would have been if for once she had consented to conduct herself like other persons, or even rationally. But for a chance clue I had picked up, should I have been so keensighted?

I don't know what Mr. Pemberton thought of Miss Hope's Romeo, but I thought it silenced criticism. Yet all the while I was half wishing, for Lady Mabel's sake, the play had never been written. Just that passionate scene between two lovers whose lives are parted, but who, undefined, will love on and on, though they die for it. Instead of Annie in embroidered satin and a studied attitude, mincing and ranting under the lime-light on the balcony, with many side glances at the spectators, I seemed to see Lady Mabel, as she sat there the other night, and now and then some line, inexpressively delivered, called up in odd contrast the unconscious pathos with which she had uttered it.

With that scene the entertainment virtually ended. A gay little epilogue, especially adapted for the occasion, lasted only a few minutes, then we hurried to our rooms to prepare for the drive. I was still overwrought with the excitement of acting. Still the image of Lady Mabel floated before my brain, with the strange look in her eyes it seemed no one else would see. Were her mother and her husband struck blind that they could remain as unconcerned as though all were well? After the impression I had received I felt I should hardly be surprised to hear of her flinging herself into the pond, or taking laudanum, or giving whatever crowning proof might be wanting of an unsound mind.

I hurried on a black silk dress, *par-dessus* and hood. There was a crush of people in the front hall, and of carriages in the drive. A prudent part of Mr. Graves' to arrange to pick me up at a point a little way off, which I could reach quietly by going round through the garden. It wanted a quarter of an hour to the time appointed, but by the lamps of a passing carriage I caught a glimpse from my window of the dog-cart standing by the shrubbery gate. Feeling rather like a thief, I slipped through back landings to the short shut-off passage leading to the glass garden door. Some one was there before me, stooping to raise the sash—some lady alone, with a dark cloak like mine thrown over her dress disguising her person. She turned sharply at the sound of my approach, and the hood fell from her head as she lifted it. It was Lady Mabel.

She started nervously, in extreme excitement, but upon seeing who it was, her countenance lightened with a quick flash of

something almost like gladness. To my broken explanations—for a numbing surprise taking hold of me froze my say on my lips—she paid no heed. Her eyes were on my face, and searched it with sudden eager entreaty, as she said in an insinuating tone of appeal:

“Do you want to be my friend?”

“If that could be,” I answered doubtfully, as I felt.

With the same fixed and beseeching gaze she continued, pressing a letter from her hand into mine:

“Will you take this note and deliver it into the hands of the person it is for, who is there at the shrubbery gate? You know him. It is Mr. Francis Gifford.”

Startled, stupefied, I drew back, saying, “Lady Mabel, it is not a friend’s part you are asking me to play.”

She clasped her hands together, perplexed, distracted; then, to my utter amazement, she handed me her letter open, saying, “Read it, please.”

I declined; she insisted, adding, “You can refuse to give it, afterwards.”

Against my will I read—a few lines only, hurriedly traced, then glanced from them to her, stunned by a sense of a terrible possibility—a gleam that came and went like a lightning flash—revealing an old bad story of a pretty woman’s worthlessness, folly, projected flight. Then all was darkness, groping, and guesses. Her calm now bewildered me, yet conveyed a deeper sense of trouble than her previous agitation; then her voice, steadier than mine, brought me to myself.

“If you will not go,” she said, “I must.”

“No,” I said quickly, instinctively; time to think, there was none. “You can go back. I consent.”

With her letter in my hand I sped down the steps into the dusky garden, along the broad gravel walk, then up a side path, through a door in the brick wall into a narrow footway running between dark shrubberies, closed at the end by a little iron gate opening into the drive.

Francis Gifford, as Lady Mabel had said, was standing beside the carriage I had mistaken for that of my escort. It was too dark for him to see clearly who was coming to meet him till I was close by.

“Lady Mabel Pemberton has charged me to give you this note,” I said.

I was out of breath with walking fast, and had twisted my ankle again; the pain forced me to stand there, leaning against the railing.

He glanced through the contents in an instant, controlling all signs of emotion or even surprise. Then an idea seemed to strike and confound him, met, as it were, by some desperate perplexity raised by this turn of affairs.

"How came you to be entrusted with this?" he asked quite quietly and naturally, but trying to read my face, I could see.

"I cannot tell you," said I, "for I have no idea why she chose me as messenger." And I turned to re-enter the shrubbery. He stopped me, keeping his hand on the gate.

"There is something more you can and will do for her yet," he said quickly, with quiet insistence. "Miss Adams, you must get into the carriage, and let me drive you to the lake and back."

A trick, to save appearances, check scandal, and throw dust in eyes put tardily on the alert. He scarcely waited for my refusal to add imperatively:

"Not when I tell you it is necessary?" Then, as I still held firm—with a complete shifting of his tone to one of grave persuasion, he urged, "If you have the least regard, or even pity, for some one who has trusted you to the point of putting herself absolutely into your power—if you are a generous girl—you will do this. It cannot affect you in any way, and it will save her unnecessary torment—that is all we have to think of just now."

Quick to seize and act upon the first symptom of wavering, he half-forced me to mount; I hardly knowing why I yielded, or whether I was doing right or wrong.

It was not ten minutes' drive to the lake, but I thought it a lifetime. My head throbbed in wild confusion, but the change from the heat and glare, the glitter and din of the show, to the cool air and darkness and stillness, the waving trees and broad green space out of doors, had a sobering effect. Along past the house, up the hill we drove, I more and more resenting his action in using me as a blind. He was right—I was only a little actress. The sight of us together could have no effect but one—to explain away into unimportance what needed to be explained.

I had never expected to open my lips during the drive. The few sentences that did pass were forced out by the oppression of awkward silence—more awkward for him than for me. It was he who broke it at last, saying:

"Remember that no blame, not of the slightest, attaches to her."

"No blame," I repeated half mechanically. "But I don't think I can understand you, Mr. Gifford."

He bit his lip, jerked the rein, and we shot down the hill. There were plenty of carriages in our wake, and a line of them before us, in the gloomy bit of road we were entering leading to the lake, now made him slacken our pace to a walk. He resumed:

"She is entirely alone and unhappy, with no one near her who comprehends her or in whom she can confide. You can understand that."

"Yes," I said. Those around her were mistaken in her; so much I had seen for myself.

We were nearing our goal. Files of carriages filled the road, skirting the water opposite the ruins. We heard the crackling of

the first rockets, let off to the cheers of the tenants. Several carriages had passed us ; we must have been seen by more than one person ; there was no further need or desire on my companion's part to court public scrutiny. Avoiding the throng, he turned the horse aside, and drew up on a bit of turf where the deep shadows of the trees screened us completely. A moment's breathing-time—the first—to look back, ask and realize what had happened. The sense of it, coming on him now with a shock and a jar, put him into a violent agitation of some kind, and forced out an audibly-dropped, almost fierce exclamation :

"What made her turn back?"

The fireworks crackled overhead ; laughter, light jests, and "ohs" of delight broke from the sightseers on the road. I was thinking, gladly, that this time to-morrow, come what might, I should be far from Dene Abbey.

Presently he said uneasily :

"You will see her to-morrow, possibly to-night. Tell her——"

"Give me no message," I prayed. "I could not take one, unless it should be that you will abide by the words of her letter."

"Do you know what they mean?" he said disturbedly. "Leave her to what only yesterday she affirmed she could bear no longer? Not mind what becomes of her? As if that was possible! or she could mean it."

"If there is the least chance of her ever being happy again where she is," I said, "can you not do as she asks—leave her to herself, to try?"

Again the sky glowed luridly overhead, and the arches of the ruins stood out in strange whiteness against the red glare.

"Well," he said at length, "no need after all to tell her anything. For she knows."

Fireworks, happily, cannot last long. Presently came a brilliant shower, whose magnificence marked it as the finale. But the press of carriages in the road prevented us from striking into it at once. Among those who passed without seeing us I noticed Miss Hope, with a gay party of actors, Mr. Pemberton, with a grave carriageful of Abbey guests.

At length we got off, and the short drive home was silent. Only, as we were nearing the house, he spoke, with a studied frankness :

"It was a very strange step on Lady Mabel's part to place her trust in you, Miss Adams, whom she scarcely knows ; but it would be stranger still if you ever gave her reason to repent it."

"Do not be afraid," I said low. Then as we drew up at the shrubby gate, it came into my mind to add :

"And I may tell her you will do as she asks, if that is her real and earnest wish?"

His answer was a look of surprise at my boldness, or my simplicity. Then he said shortly :

"You may tell her that."

He helped me down. "There," he said. "Can you find your way now?"

I flew rather than ran back into the garden, and across the grass to the steps leading to the house entrance, which fortunately had been left unbolted. Once indoors, I breathed freely, and was hoping to reach my room unobserved, when in the corridor out of which it opened I met Mr. Pemberton. I passed without looking at him. My hand was on the lock of the sitting-room door, when he spoke my name in a tone which made me turn to him in momentary indignation, quickly forgotten now. With all his regard for decorum, he was no actor.

"Did you call me, Mr. Pemberton?" I inquired.

He hesitated, mortally perplexed, as indeed was I.

"Have you seen Lady Mabel?" he asked unemphatically. "Do you know where she is?"

"I do not," said I, passing into the empty sitting-room. I could not shut the door in his face. But I knew my appearance was wild and disordered, my manner guilty and awkward.

"Are you sure?" he said, following me into the room, voice and manner plainly signifying his disbelief in my word.

"I saw her last immediately after the play," said I; "and if I may be permitted to say so, Mr. Pemberton, I think she needs taking care of. She was looking terribly ill."

"Ill?" he echoed mechanically, as if confounded by such incredible dissimulation. Some hint had reached him, and with it some intimation that she and I were in collusion. A violent twinge in my ankle forced me to sit down. He stood irresolute; but my countenance had betrayed some knowledge.

"You had better speak truth," he said with stern contempt. "She is not here, and you know it."

"Grant that there you are mistaken."

As I spoke, my change of countenance made him turn to look round. Lady Mabel was standing behind him in the doorway. She had entered whilst he was speaking; she was ashy pale, and with the same hollow rings round her eyes, but their expression was free and natural again. She was still in her evening dress and diamonds.

She gave her husband one short look, but without stopping to take further notice of his presence she addressed herself to me, saying in a steady, childlike voice:

"Miss Adams, I have come to ask for your help. My mother is not at all well to-night; I am going to sit up with her myself, and want you to stay for a few hours in the next room. The maid is new, and worse than useless, and the servants are all in confusion. Could you come at once?"

"I am ready," I said, rising instantly. She led the way. Mr. Pemberton made a movement, as if to follow, or prevent our going. She half-turned, saying:

"Do not come. She is nervous and excited and will bear nobody in the room but me. The housekeeper has gone to bed with a sick headache. Miss Adams shall sit in the dressing-room, and can summon you or the servants should it be necessary to send for the doctor. But she will not hear of it, and for the present we know what to do."

He made no further objection, leaving us in the passage leading to the Duchess's apartments.

In a few hurried words Lady Mabel told me how immediately after I left her she had been met by the maid, flying in a panic to announce that the Duchess, who, as previously arranged, had retired immediately after the theatricals, was alarmingly ill. Hastening upstairs with her she found the invalid in a feverish, suffering state, aggravated by the nervous inefficiency of her attendants, whom the excitement of the *fête* and fright combined had utterly demoralized. "Then I thought of you," she said, "and came to fetch you at once."

CHAPTER XIV.

STRANDED.

UNTIL then "the Duchess" had barely been more to me than a social expression. True I had seen her, spoken with her, and been pleasantly impressed, as was everybody, high and low, by her rare amiability and animation. Something of her daughter's lively and sensitive temperament, without any of its extravagance. Full of nervous energy, of interest in all that was going on under the sun, of enjoyment of society, and busy besides with the ten thousand good works she always had in hand, she appeared to forget, till she sometimes led others to forget in reality, how frail was her hold upon life. A constitutional delicacy of the chest had brought on a serious illness some years before, from which real recovery was out of the question, and since which the least aggravation of the disorder, such as threatened now, might bring positive danger. She seemed extraordinarily susceptible, and the fidgety officiousness of two frightened ladies' maids worried her perceptibly. Lady Mabel sent them out of sight and hearing, and having satisfied herself that my presence in the room was more agreeable to the invalid, and my services accepted—as really sick people accept quietly anything that alleviates their condition—begged me to stay. Her own tact and nursing skill were astonishing. She knew the ground, and her voice and touch exercised a soothing and mesmeric effect. All the needful remedies were at hand, there was plenty to do, and we were on our feet until six in the morning, when by degrees our patient became quieter and slept. Then only I persuaded Lady Mabel, who was thoroughly

exhausted, to lie down in the dressing-room, promising to wake her at the least sign of change.

Towards nine o'clock she awoke of herself suddenly, half-started up with a scared look round and a wild, tell-tale exclamation barely checked, as she saw me sitting by her side. Her fingers closed on her hand tightly, a nervous shock ran through her frame, and she sank back shivering, as with cold or fear. Then, as her senses cleared, she tried to put a question, but her lips trembled so that she could not speak.

"She is still asleep," I said. "I trust the danger is passing away. The housekeeper is there, and will tell us when she wakes."

"How selfish I am," she murmured, raising her eyes to mine. "You look pale yourself; you must be tired."

"Not much." I was feeling no fatigue, only, as I spoke, such an excruciating spasm in my ankle as drove me to add, "But I twisted my foot whilst acting last night, and I think I had better go and bathe it by-and-by, if there is nothing more I can do."

Here the housekeeper tapped at the door to announce that the Duchess was awake, and asking for us both.

She declared herself better, thanked me smilingly for my help and attention, and would have detained me now had not her daughter represented that I alone of her nurses had taken not a moment's rest, and undergone the double exertion of acting and sitting up. At last I was set free to go and try and remove the traces of a sleepless night. I was growing alarmed about my foot, which had been paining horribly and was beginning to swell. I got back to my room with difficulty, and fell on the sofa in agonies. I struggled to reach the bell; the wire was broken. I called to Miss Hope, to Annie, but they had gone off to breakfast. There seemed nothing for it but to wait until I was found. Half an hour later Charlotte, marching into our sitting-room by one door, confronted me painfully struggling in by the other, nerved to a last effort by desperation at finding matters getting worse every minute.

"Why, you poor lame duck!" she exclaimed in commiseration. "What's amiss?"

I told her. The facts spoke for themselves. My ankle was mountainously swelled. She set bells ringing, servants flying, and in due time the doctor, who had just been visiting the Duchess, came to see and report on my case.

He looked grave; said it might be a fracture; but that there was no telling till the inflammation, now fast increasing, had abated, pronounced me in a highly feverish condition, and positively forbade me to move.

My despair was absolute, and aggravated by dreadful physical discomfort. Surely a more exasperating mischance never befell innocent young person. A fixtured in a strange house, lying there

on the sofa helpless and wretched, with aching foot bandaged like a mummy, and Charlotte trapesing about in boisterous spirits, bringing me breakfast I could not eat, inventing absurd consolations I thought cruel, and laughing, actually laughing at my distress and dismay each time she looked in in the intervals of her packing up, which was going on briskly. The company were off to Broadgate that morning, to start thence on their several ways.

"Now I call this a special providence," she asserted, coming at last, her preparations concluded, to seat herself by my side.

"If you knew how horribly it hurts!" I gasped, at a fresh paroxysm.

"Here you are housed for some days at least," she went on imperturbably. "Slater's due in London this very night—that I know. They're kind people here, and won't turn you out till you're cured."

"But what's to become of me, cured?" I asked dolefully.

"Don't worry. Write to me in Edinburgh. I've a notion. Have you written what you had to write to Mr. Slater? Yes. Well, I'm going to write you a letter of recommendation to her Grace."

"Don't chaff," I retorted fractiously.

"I'm in earnest," she said laughing, as she left the room.

I could not guess what she meant, and was feeling too ill to care any more what became of me. Before starting, the "company" looked in to wish me good-bye and condole with me on my mishap. I could have cried to see them departing, leaving me behind. It was hard thus to lose sight of my comrades—it might be for ever, so far as I could see.

"So this is why you played me false last night," remarked Beattie Graves. "I waited and waited till patience expired——"

"And nobody came," said I, thankful no further questions were asked.

"I was too late for the fireworks, and I swore vengeance; but I forgive you now, and hope you'll get well quickly."

"I wouldn't hurry if I were you," said Annie significantly. "You'll have a good time here. If I'd thought of it I'd have started a sprain myself."

"Do you know, I quite envy you," Davenant confessed. "Dene Abbey is a perfectly charming place—only less charming than the people. I would give anything to be laid up here for a month. Such luck only happens in books or to ladies."

"Oh, to change places and ankles with you!" I thought in reply. Vain desire! Off went each actor, on his ass or otherwise, safe, sound, and gay as grasshoppers; and there was I, thanks in the main to Lady Mabel's vagaries, a writhing, miserable incumbance, possibly lamed for life, said imagination, lying there at

the mercy of pert housemaids, and without even the satisfaction of knowing what was going on in the Abbey. Every time a door slammed I fancied it was Mr. Pemberton's wife leaving her home, or Mr. Pemberton going to exchange pistol-shots with Francis Gifford in the park. For wild disorder my visions that night might have matched those of Lady Mabel or any other conscience-stricken dreamer of dreams.

For the next two days I was in such pain that I was utterly indifferent to the existence of a world beyond my ankle. There was little to be done. "Nothing for it but patience," philosophized Mrs. Brown, the housekeeper, a motherly old body who took to me because I was an orphan, and the image, she declared, of her daughter in Tasmania. (I hoped, from the daguerreotype she showed me, that this was merely her way of accounting for her kindly solicitude.) Lady Mabel had given orders I should be well looked after, which Mrs. Brown undertook to see carried out. She had no liking for play-actresses, she told me plainly; but she had somehow mixed me up with that paragon, Anne Carew; and thanks to the noble domestic virtues I had displayed in that character, I had won the good woman's regard, as a "real decent body, so different to that Miss Hope—a wild, ragged slip of an Indian girl—such a she-savage as I never thought to live to see inside the walls of Dene Abbey."

The second evening she came to sit with me and brought her knitting, was sure I should be better for a little company; she herself loved nothing better than a little chat—in other words, a good gossip—and with a listener to whom her reminiscences (she had been all her life in the service of Lady Mabel's mother) were new.

The invalid's condition, I learnt from her, was still somewhat critical. Lady Mabel would not leave her night or day, never seemed tired, snatched what rest she could in the dressing-room. There was really no need now, Mrs. Brown observed, as the new attendant was getting her hand in, and had proved a fairly capable person after all; but Lady Mabel never spared herself when her mother was ill, and could do wonders in the way of persuasion and management. It was unlucky it should have happened just now, when there was a strange maid and no "companion" at all. But oh, the last companion! What a two years' nuisance, and nothing more, she had been! But the dear Duchess was so kind-hearted, so averse to parting with her dependants, for they all became so attached to her that it broke their hearts to quit, and in this case gave rise to such a moving scene that her Grace declared she never would give this particular dependant a successor, for fear of having to send her away. That was all very well so long as Lady Mabel was with her, but Mr. Pemberton made a point of living on his Irish estate as much as possible, and was in a hurry to return after an unusually protracted absence; though why any gentleman

should choose to go just to be shot at, Mrs. Brown, for her part, could not conceive.

On the third day I was much better. The fever had disappeared; the ankle was resuming its normal proportions, and the doctor gave the comforting assurance that no bone was broken. The limb was badly strained, but to-morrow he would be able to bandage it so that I could walk.

Walk, where? Into my grave? asks Hamlet. Back to Mr. Slater? I might have inquired. Not that I repented my decision. A thousand times, no. But how unlike, methought, is life to a novel in those love-passages with which novels chiefly concern themselves. Or was it only because I was twenty, and should I, grown older and wiser, be ready to go to the altar with a Tom Dulley or a Shirley Slater? That was a poor-spirited conclusion I really couldn't admit for a moment. The likelihood was that love and marriage meant to pass me by altogether. For I had never been in love—never; not with Tom Dulley, or Shirley Slater, or Edwin Davenant; nor yet with another.

Ah, Mr. James Romney, where, I wonder, are you now, and how filling your time? Passed, and gazetted, and perhaps with your regiment in India, you are smoking your cheroot at Maderabad, or tiger-shooting, or polo-playing, or whatever the favourite sport is. Do you ever think of Talaton sands, and the ley, and the words we spoke as the boat stood still among the reeds, and the seagulls and skylarks soared overhead? Or if you recall it, is it not as a good story to tell your messmates now, once upon a time, for a joke, you joined a theatrical troupe? Any pretty girls among them? Oh, aye, one very pretty girl in particular—and you smile volumes. No need to go back to that, to let them know what you can do in the way of flirtation. A young man must have his fling, and Maderabad's a lively station, and you're in the set which is noisy and fast; and there's Miss Violet Pringle, who's no prude, and whose ways make her boldest admirers—among whom you are counted—stare sometimes; and Mrs. Nixie, the beauty, who likes a gang of cavaliers in her train, and has singled you out, though the youngest, for a notice that makes your seniors jealous. So the merry years go by, now in India, now in England, till you tire of it, and time comes for settling down. Turn the lock on the past, and another door opens. Trust your family to find you a bride to your liking and theirs. It's little Gracie Hardecash, the rich banker's daughter—youth and innocence just out of the school-room—quite ready to be wooed and won. No occasion for her to know everything about Miss Violet or Mrs. Nixie; and perhaps if she did she would not mind. She jealous? You can never seriously have cared for those people, or for any one, or you would not be proposing to her now. So you marry, and live happily ever after.

At which imaginary conclusion I melted suddenly into tears. Almost at that moment somebody knocked, and Lady Mabel entered softly. I blushed, much ashamed, but she did not even perceive that I had been crying.

She came, seated herself by the sofa, and took my hand. Her touch was cold and numb. From her expression I saw that something grave had happened, yet when she spoke her voice startled me by its unaffected tranquillity.

"For me," she said, "the worst is over now."

I gazed at her, uncertain and uneasy; my first thoughts had run to the invalid. "Your mother?" I asked anxiously; "she is not worse?"

"No, no, she is much better; she is recovering," she replied hastily, then added impassively as at first, "I am speaking of myself, and of—John."

"What is it that you mean?" I asked.

"I mean that he has spoken out, and so have I," she said with some return of her usual vivacity. "My path was clear at last. I have done with secrecy, and there is relief in that. Pretence was stifling me; but now he knows all that he could possibly comprehend, and all that signifies to him. He leaves for Ireland to-night."

"Leaves you?" I exclaimed, mystified afresh.

"Yes," she went on with a nervous laugh. "It is strange, is it not, how things happen? But chance has forced on what could not after all have been put off many days."

"This morning he sent for me. His Irish agent has telegraphed to him what he considers very serious news. There have been disturbances for the first time in our neighbourhood, and he thinks his immediate return imperative to prevent the ill-feeling from affecting the district under his control. But first of all this explanation with me had to be gone through. Unimportant though I might be in myself, in what concerns his name—his own honour—there he is careful."

"Something had come to his knowledge, of my intention—how, I do not know, nor does it matter; I was not thinking of concealment then, and I spared him all questionings now. I owned everything, exactly as it was, for I wished him to know the whole truth—that I had made up my mind to leave his home and him, to unite my life with that of the man who loved me as I was—that the contempt of the world and society would be nothing to bear, compared to what I had endured of his harshness and neglect, that I only was responsible for the resolution that involved another, who for my sake would have dissuaded me from the step I forced on, and that accident only prevented my taking."

"No, no," I exclaimed; "some thought in you forbade it—held you back."

"I had tried to keep from thinking," she said; "you must not, when you have made up your mind not to look back, only forward; then you can be cruel; you are like a drowning person, all dumb in you but one purpose—to live; let those who must, go under. It was a little thing changed my intention and made me write." She paused, then added, with characteristic introspection, "I meant every word, and yet, when I met you by chance, I knew I must trust you to do for me what I wanted, that I could not have trusted myself."

"Don't think of that," I said quickly.

"It is of no consequence now," she said. "Do you think I should try to repel suppositions that were so amply well founded? I have done nothing I repent—said nothing I would unsay. And he has taken his decision, in which I entirely concur."

"And it is——"

"That we separate. He is going home—nominally to return for me when the country is quieter and I can leave my mother. But he will not come back—not to me."

Her voice had a ring of bitter triumph. It was as if in the power she found left her to sting she dreamt a sort of wild justice—her revenge for his previous indifference.

"I think he would have liked to have killed me," she continued with self-convincing vehemence. "Could anything but my death honourably release him from his bondage now? If I would be so obliging as to die! Ah, if one could die for the wishing!"

Her sadness was sincere, her case desperate, yet for her and for him the worst, methought, had only begun.

A wife who has made up her mind to leave you, who alters it at the eleventh hour, and is thus thrust back on your protection which she scorns, your authority which she resists, your society which she shuns, your forgiveness of which she will not hear—the present a deadlock, the past embittered, the future something you can scarce bring yourself to contemplate—how would Mr. John Pemberton conduct himself in such an emergency? and was Lady Mabel capable of the most distant idea of the extent of her revenge?

"Then it is decided?" I said presently.

"Everything is decided. I said I had one thing only to request—that the breach should not be made known until it is seen what turn my mother's illness is likely to take. The knowledge of our estrangement would distress her so much that in her present condition it might bring danger to her life."

"Do you mean that she does not know?"

"She knows nothing whatever. All her life she has been colour-blind where the dark colours are concerned; and I have always been cheerful when with her, to spare her whilst I could. I asked him to spare her the worst a little longer, as it was easy."

I said, 'The troubles on your estate will account to her for your remaining away; her illness for my remaining here to nurse her. Let me keep the truth from her as long as possible. To keep it for ever may not mean very long.'

"To this he agreed. It was too late for reproaches. His own course he had determined on. He regarded our union as broken. He would give me back my liberty, take the blame in the eyes of the world, but after the confession I had made of my sentiments, to prolong even the pretence of amicable relations was impossible, as by so doing he would seem to himself to countenance the disgrace I had owned myself ready to bring upon his name."

So the tale ended. She had broken lastingly with her husband; broken—for how long?—with her lover—she who was as little fitted to stand alone as the passion-flowers that trailed up the greenhouse. I had been pitying myself the moment before; I was thinking now if any woman in the world would care to change futures with rich, pretty, fortune-favoured Mabel Pemberton.

It was she who brought back my thoughts to the present by asking if I had not nearly recovered from my accident.

"Lady Mabel," I said, "I have now to thank you and the Duchess for your hospitality, and not to trespass upon it any further. The doctor says I may leave to-morrow."

"No, no," she said quickly; "you are to stay on. It is all settled. Miss Hope has written a long letter telling us all about you and your difficulties, and recommending you to my mother as companion."

"She has?" said I, much annoyed at what struck me as a practical joke.

"Please stay till you see how you like it," she said in the coaxing, caressing way in which she would ask for your head if she wanted it, and think it rather inhuman of you to decline.

But I only inquired what my duties would be.

"To read aloud chiefly, and write mamma's letters; she is forbidden to use her eyes much. She was delighted with the idea, for she has taken a very great fancy to you, and she is to have everything she likes, the doctor says. Will you stay?"

If I was not quite so delighted as Davenant would have been, I must own there was luck for me in this turn of affairs. Immediate difficulties were done away with; and I had caught some of the recklessness of my associates, and was learning not to distress myself about the lions in the path round the corner.

(To be continued.)

ON MARRIED WOMEN'S SURNAMES.

IT is becoming the fashion among married ladies in London to keep their maiden name in addition to their husband's surname. This practice has long been in vogue amongst actresses and other ladies who have made a reputation for themselves before marriage, the benefit of which they are unwilling to lose. The names of Mesdames Goldschmidt-Lind, Trebelli-Bettini, Lemmens-Sherrington and hosts of others will readily occur to every one as cases in point. But until lately the fashion was confined in England to actresses, singers, authoresses, and other ladies whose loss at marriage through the change of name would have been so substantial a pecuniary one that it might be estimated in thousands of pounds. It is only now that ladies in private life have begun to realize the fact that their own loss on changing their name and thus, to a great extent, losing their identity, is quite as real and quite as important to themselves as the actress's would be to her, although possibly no one would go so far as to say it had a monetary value. The loss of many old friends as well as of possible bonds of sympathy between herself and new acquaintances is the common result, to a bride, of the total suppression of the name by which she has been hitherto known. Who is to recognize the bosom friend of her school-days, her adored Araminta Cleveland or Belinda Moreville, under the prosaic disguise of "Mrs. Smith" or "Mrs. Jones?" One might be on the same steamer with her, or staying in the same hotel and be none the wiser. One might live next door to her for years in London, seeing her name constantly in the Blue Book or Court Guides, and yet never recognize her as the playmate of one's childish days. More painful still, she might possibly, should she die a rich and childless widow, wish to leave something handsome to her old schoolfellow, in default of other heirs; but, her old friend having taken to herself the name of Mrs. Brown, and thereby made the disguise doubly complete, both go down to their graves deprived of the friendship which might have solaced their declining years, the survivor being also deprived of the sad but nevertheless real consolation of being the other's residuary legatee.

When a girl marries it is usually only the favoured few who are present at the wedding breakfast who really manage to remember her new name and address. "Seeing is believing," and the personality of the bridegroom is borne in upon them by

the recollection of his face during the idiotic attempt at a speech which he makes, while his name is impressed at the same time on their memories by his health being drunk and by their seeing it engraved on cards, lockets, bracelets and various other wedding presents. But the rest of the bride's acquaintance, numbering, perhaps, many hundreds, are very hazy on the subject, and one often hears the question: "Let me see, what is Mary So-and-So's name now, and where does she live?" The answer to which generally occasions the rejoinder: "Dear me! we must have been quite close to her the other day; what a pity we did not know, we should have liked so much to go and see her." To many a warm heart the loss of such visits is an evil quite as great as the loss of money, or even greater, and hence the present movement on the part of married women. It certainly will have many advantages if it becomes general, not only to the ladies themselves, but to all their friends and acquaintances, especially if the double surname comes, in course of time, to be the distinguishing mark of a married woman; for, as it would form part of a lady's ordinary signature, which the title of Mrs. or Miss does not, many a correspondent would be relieved from the harassing doubt which now besets him as to whether he is to address his reply to Mrs., Miss, or Esq.

The point has been much discussed whether it is advisable for the husband or children to bear the double surname also. In the cases above quoted of celebrated singers the interchange of names is mutual between husband and wife. Doubtless this has been found advantageous by the husbands; for in addition to keeping their own names, with the lustre which already surrounded them, they acquired the further glory attaching to those of their wives. The same argument might be used with regard to men in private life, only substituting the word "friends" for that of "glory." There are many occasions in life when a man might be all the better for the help of his wife's old friends. Especially is this the case on his arriving in any new place, whether it be only for a flying visit or for a permanent residence. It is a proverbial saying that if a new family goes to settle in a country neighbourhood, the first year they are stared at, the second year people ask each other who they are, and the third year some one offers them a hymn-book in church. This is all very right and prudent, the simple cause of it being that no one knows anything substantial about them. The husband's name and profession (if any) are speedily known, but that is all and that is not enough. The wife's former name and profession (if any)—which are far more important from a social point of view, for on them depends chiefly the answer to the great question, "Ought we to visit her?"—are not known and not likely to be known, unless some lucky accident discloses them. Since it is not good manners for ladies to ask each other on a slight acquaintance, "What was your maiden name?" the

new-comer's position is at a dead-lock ; for the neighbours cannot be friends with her until they know "who she was," and cannot know who she was until they become intimate friends. So the ostracism goes on ; and all this while the husband and children suffer from it as well as herself, while possibly the mere mention of her own name would at once dispel all doubts and raise her up friends in all directions through some one's accidentally happening to know her "people."

Again, it is argued by some that it would be a great advantage to children through life if they bore their mother's name as well as their father's. If there is any use in a father's name—and most people, especially foundlings, will be inclined to admit that there is—surely there is equal use in the mother's. The children by its suppression are cut off from many hereditary acquaintances and friends who might be useful to them. In Spain the value of a name is rated so highly that a child of good birth bears not only that of its father and mother, but of its grandparents in addition. This, however, is carrying things to a cumbersome extreme, and it has the result of making the child's names so numerous that most of them are seldom used.

The whole thing, in fact, resolves itself into a question of convenience. In the case of the married woman, the slight inconvenience of signing herself by two surnames instead of one will be more than balanced by the advantages of the new arrangement, as soon as it becomes generally known that the first of any two surnames is likely to be the maiden name of a married woman. In the husband's case also the same may be said. But when we come to the children, complications at once arise.

Suppose a Mr. Smith has married a Miss Brown, and the pair, with their children, have gone since the marriage by the surname of Brown-Smith ; by what names are the young people to be known when they in their turn marry ? Are they to encumber themselves, like the Spaniards, with three surnames ? Some reply : "No ; let Mr. Brown-Smith, junior, when he marries Miss Green, drop his mother's name and take his wife's, the two thus becoming a pair of Green-Smiths ; while his sister Miss Brown-Smith, when she marries Mr. Robinson, also drops her mother's name and becomes Mrs. Smith-Robinson."

Others object to this plan on the ground that there is too much changing of names altogether in it ; also that if a man were married four or five times, he would have to change the first of his two surnames so often that his best friends would not know him, and even his creditors would have difficulty in identifying him. But, after all, his second surname would always remain the same and therefore he would still be more easily identified than a woman who has married once ; yet we never heard of any lady whose creditors did not manage to find her out, however often she

might change her name. It is not creditors, but friends, who are alienated by the old-fashioned plan; for creditors have ways and means of making inquiries which friends would not choose to employ.

Of course there are cases in which a lady is glad to drop her maiden name for ever, and would like to conceal from all the world the fact that she has ever borne it. Such feelings are natural and even praiseworthy if her patronymic was Scroggins or Buggins, or her father a dead ragpicker, the suppression of whose name can do him no harm, and may please her husband. But such cases are fortunately rare, and as the new fashion is not compulsory, no objection will be made by society at large to any lady's dropping her maiden name if she chooses. It is true that her doing so may possibly give rise to the suspicion that she has some good cause for being ashamed of it; and it is also true that ladies who have such cause would do better to change their names as soon as possible, without waiting for marriage, as thereby they will increase their chance of marrying well. A man is far more likely to propose to a girl whose name was Scroggins two years ago than to a girl whose name is Scroggins now. The fear of an advertisement in the first column of the *Times*, beginning "De Montmorency-Scroggins," will no longer loom horrent in his imagination and cause him to check himself whenever he is inclined to yield to his Amelia's fascinations—no! for she will have divested herself of it as soon as she came to years of discretion and will have taken instead some name so euphonious that he will be proud to tack it on in front of his own.

If a woman's name is so objectionable that it must be changed, it should not be done at the very moment of marriage, when so many other obstacles intervene between her and her old friends.

We ourselves see no real necessity for either the husband taking his wife's name, or the children their mother's. The only person greatly injured by the plan hitherto pursued is the wife herself. She has been deprived of the name to which by birth she is entitled and which she has borne for many years. That is not the case with her husband or her sons, who are allowed always to keep the names by which they have been known from childhood, though they may have had as many wives as Elubeard; as for her daughters, the same rule that preserves her identity will preserve theirs.

Those husbands who may fear that they see in this movement a tendency to self-assertion on the part of the ladies may be reassured by reflecting that after all it is only proposed that a married woman, instead of being called by the name of one masculine owner, as hitherto, shall now be called by the names of two—her husband and father; so that the supremacy of the male sex will be more fully recognized than ever.

E. ROBERTSON INNES.

AN IDYLL.

SHE hangs above the swift mill-race
Her girlish tresses backward thrown,
Lips sweet as roses meadow-grown,
Blue eyes that light with Saxon grace :
And ponders on the frothing moan
Tossed by the river in its chase.

Vain bubbles! Leaping to the sky
And whirling in your flashing whirl,
And striving ever higher each pearl,
That fleecy urge your breath and sigh
And wreathe in alway idle curl,
And reach her only when you die.

And, loitering thrortle, foolish peal
Of plaintive voices questioning,
Be sure it were a wicked thing
For thee to dare her kisses steal ;
An empty song, and wantoning
For lips that poorer hearts might heal.

And chanting softly till they call
Back schoolday dreams of hours from old,
About her head the breezes fold ;
Or gay laburnum blossoms fall
To print their faces to the mould
And ease their spirit of her thrall.

Cease, envy, cease my heart to fray !
Nor breeze nor blossom can remain :
Go, zephyr, join thy tardy train,
And wither, golden flower, away !
—And we, too, for our deeper pain
May win no freedom if we stay.

CLIFFORD KITCHIN..

1870

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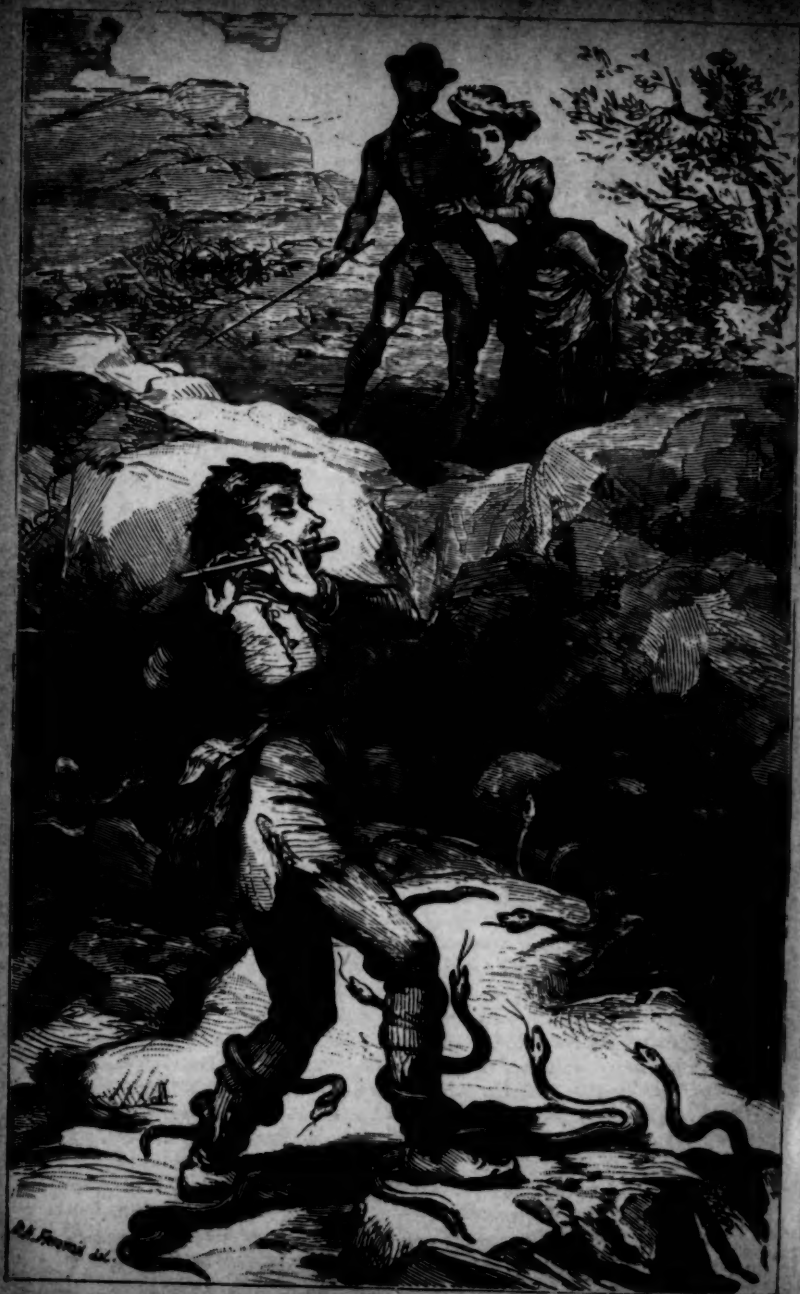
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"OLD LEATHERS" SHOWING HIS FEEL.